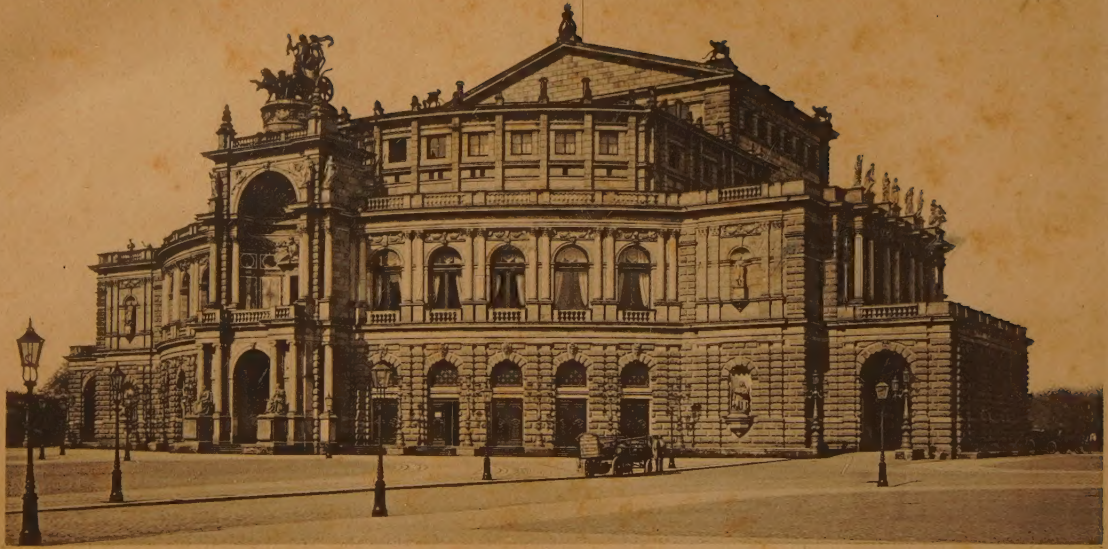
CHARLES ANNESLEY

The Standard Operaglass

DETAILED PLOTS
OF
NINETY CELEBRATED OPERAS.

Breyfogle



ROYAL OPERA AT DRESDEN.

The Standard-Operaglass

CONTAINING

THE DETAILED PLOTS

OF

NINETY CELEBRATED OPERAS

WITH CRITICAL REMARKS, DATES &c. &c.

BY

Charles Annesley.

THIRD AND REVISED EDITION.

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"The Sun and Earth."
By Bayer.

This a ballet in four scenes and was the most gorgeous spectacle I ever witness. It is considered the finest spectacular and transformation piece ever put on the stage, and it truly was dazzling.

I. Allegory — Sun, earth, fairies and flowers, changing all the time.

II. In the Spring-time. Botanist pretty girl in pink, peak poet in light blue, school-children, flower-girls, etc. — charming ballet of little Greenaway girls.

III. On the beach. — Bathers, officers, lovely hotel, dudes, fruit-girls, bath-houses, basket chairs, etc, etc. Most fascinating ballet I ever saw, of fifty girls in the dearest bathing-suits — no two alike, and fifty boys in the cutest yachting suits — it could not have been a prettier dance. Spanish National Dance by a black haired little witch all in bright red, accompanied by ten men in picturesque costumes, with tambourines

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August "Loreley" — Mendelssohn.
" "Wiener Walzer."
" "Die Puppenfee."

Stella E.M. Bransfield

ABU HASSAN.

Comic opera in one act by Weber.

Text by Hiemer.

This little opera, composed by Weber in his early youth and first represented at Dresden under the composer's own direction, for a time fell into utter oblivion, but has lately been reproduced.

Though short and unpretending it really deserves to be heard, the music is so full of sweetness, so fresh and pretty.

The text is taken from a tale of the Arabian Thousand and One Nights, and though full of nonsense, it amuses by its lightheartedness and gaiety of spirit.

Abu Hassan, favorite of the Calif of Bagdad, has lived above his means, and is now regaled with bread and water by his wife Fatima, whose only fault is, that she sings better than she cooks. In order to better his fortunes Abu Hassan hits upon a strange plan. He sends his wife to the Calif's wife, Zobeïde, to announce his (Hassan's) death, for which she will obtain 50 gold pieces and a piece of brocade. Fatima departs and in the meantime enter Abu Hassan's creditors with the appeal for money. Unable to satisfy them the debtor approaches the eldest and richest among them, and so pacifies him with sweet words which he is given

to understand Fatima has sent him, that old Omar consents to pay all the creditors.

When they are gone, Fatima returns with Zobeïde's presents, and Abu Hassan prepares to go in his turn to the Calif, in order to repeat a similar death-story about his wife and get a like sum. While he is away Omar reappears. He has bought all Hassan's accounts from his numerous creditors and offers them to Fatima for a kiss. At this moment the husband returns. Omar is shut into the adjoining cabinet, and the wife secretly points out the caged bird to her spouse who begins to storm at finding the door of the next room closed, greatly to the anguish of the old sinner Omar, — anguish, which is enjoyed by his tormentors to the full. In the midst of this scene Mesrur, messenger of the Calif, appears, to find out whether Fatima is really dead. The Calif and his wife having each received news of the death of the other's favorite, want to know, who it was, that died, and — if both are dead — who died first. The Calif affirms, that it is Fatima — his wife, that it is Abu Hassan. They have made a bet, and Mesrur, seeing Fatima lying motionless on the divan, covered with the brocade, and her husband in evident distress beside her, runs away to convey the tidings to the Calif. He is hardly gone, when Zobeïde's nurse, Zemrud comes on a similar errand from her mistress. Fatima, who has just covered her husband with the brocade, receives her with tears and laments, and the nurse departs triumphantly.

Hassan presently comes to life again but he

and Fatima are not long permitted to congratulate one another on the success of their scheme for the arrival of the Calif with his wife is pompously announced. Both throw themselves on the divans, covering themselves, and so the august couple finds them dead. The Calif, much afflicted by the sight, offers 1000 gold pieces to anyone, who can tell him, which of the two died first. No sooner does Hassan hear this than tearing aside his cover, he throws himself at the Calif's feet, crying out: „It was I, who died first!" at the same time craving the Calif's pardon together with the gold pieces. Fatima is also speedily resuscitated and the Calif pardons his favorites, Hassan meanwhile asserting, that he only died badly, in order to live better. Omar, who has paid their bills in the hope of winning Fatima's love, is driven away in disgrace.

L'AFRICAINE.

Opera in five acts by G. Meyerbeer.

Text by E. Scribe, translated by Gumpert.

L'Africaine, one of the Maëstro's last operas (1865), unites in itself all the strength and at the same time all the weakness of Meyerbeer's composition

The music is easy flowing and enthralls us with its delicious melodies; but it only appeals to our enses, and nobler thoughts are altogether wanting. Nevertheless the opera finds favor by reason of these advantages, which are supplemented by an interesting, though rather improbable libretto.

The famous Portuguese navigator Vasco de Gama (born in 1469) is the hero, though he does

not appear in the best possible light, and is by no means strictly historical.

The first scene is laid in Lisbon. Donna Ines, Admiral Diego's daughter is to give her hand to Don Pedro, a counsellor of King Emmanuel of Portugal. But she has pledged her faith to Vasco de Gama, who has been sent with Diaz, the navigator, to double the Cape, in order to seek for a new land, containing treasures, similar to those discovered by Columbus. Reports have reached Lisbon, that the whole fleet has been destroyed, when suddenly Vasco de Gama appears before the assembled council of state.

He eloquently describes the dangers of the unknown seas near the Cape and gives an account of the shipwreck, from which he alone has escaped. He then places his maps before the council, endeavoring to prove, that beyond Africa there is another country, yet to be explored and conquered

Vasco has on his way home picked up a man and a woman of an unknown race. Those slaves however stubbornly refuse to betray the name of their country, and a lively debate ensues between the Grand Inquisitor and the younger more enlightened members of the council, as to the course, which should be adopted with Vasco. At last, owing to the irritation caused by his violent reproaches, fanaticism is victorious, and instead of being furnished with a ship to explore those unknown lands, he is thrown into prison, on the plea of his being a heretic, for having maintained the existence of countries which were not mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.

The second act takes place in a cell of the Inquisition, in which Vasco has been languishing for a month past, in the company of the strange slaves Nelusco and Selica. The latter has lost her heart to the proud Portuguese, who saved her and her companion from a slave-ship. But Vasco is only thinking of Ines, and Nelusco, who honors in Selica not only his Queen, but the woman of his love, tries to stab Vasco — the Christian, whom he hates with a deadly hatred. Selica hinders him and rouses the sleeping Vasco, who has been dreaming of and planning his voyage to the unknown country.

Selica now shows him on the map the way to her native isle, and he vows her eternal gratitude. His liberty is indeed near at hand, for hardly has he given his vow, than Ines steps in to announce that Vasco is free. She has paid dearly for her lover's deliverance however, for she has given her hand to Vasco's rival Don Pedro, who, having got all Vasco's plans and maps, is commissioned by government, to set out on the voyage of discovery.

Ines has been told, that Vasco has forgotten her for Selica the slave. In order to prove his fidelity, our ungrateful hero immediately presents her with the two slaves, and Don Pedro resolves to make use of them for his exploration.

In the third act we are on board of Don Pedro's ship in the Indian seas. Donna Ines is with her husband and Nelusco has been appointed pilot. Don Alvar, a member of the council and Don Pedro's friend, warns the latter, that Nelusco is meditating treason, for they have already lost

two ships; but Pedro disregards the warning. A typhoon arises, and Nelusco turns the ship again northward. But Vasco has found means to follow them on a small sailing vessel; he overtakes them and knowing the spot well where Diaz was shipwrecked, he entreats them to change their course, his only thought being Donna Ines' safety. But Pedro, delighted to have his rival in his power, orders him to be bound and shot. Ines hearing his voice, invokes her husband's mercy. Just then the tempest breaks out, the vessel strikes upon a rock and the cannibals inhabiting the neighboring country leap on board to liberate their Queen Selica and to massacre the whole crew, in the fulfilment of which intention they are however arrested by Selica.

In the following acts Selica resides as Queen on the Isle of Madagascar. The people renders her homage, but her priests demand the strangers' lives as a sacrifice to their gods, while the women are condemned to inhale the poisoned perfume of the Manzanillo-tree. — In order to save Vasco Selica proclaims him her husband and takes Nelusco as witness, swearing to him that if Vasco is sacrificed she will die with him. Nelusco, whose love for his Queen is greater even than his hatred for Vasco, vouches for their being man and wife, and the people now proceed to celebrate the solemn rites of marriage.

Vasco, at last recognizing Selica's great love, and believing Ines dead, once more vows eternal fidelity to her, but alas, hearing the voice of Ines,

who is about to be led to death, he turns pale and Selica but too truly divines the reason.

In the fifth act Selica is resolved to put her rival to death. She sends for her, but perceiving Ines' love, her wrath vanishes, her magnanimity soars above her hatred of the Christians, and she orders Nelusco to bring Ines and Vasco on board of a ship about to sail for Portugal.

Selica herself, unable to endure life without her beloved-one, proceeds to the Cape, where the Manzanillo-tree spreads his poisonous shade. — Her eyes fastened on the vast ocean and on the white sail of the retiring vessel, she inhales the sweet but deadly perfume of the blossoms and the returning Nelusco finds her dying, while an unseen chorus consoles her with the thought that in Loves' eternal domain all are equal.

AÏDA.

Grand romantic opera in four acts by Giuseppe Verdi.

Text by Antonio Ghislanzoni. Translated into German by S. Schanz. English version by Kenney.

This opera owes its great popularity not only to its brilliant music and skilful instrumentation, but also to its really magnificent outfit and decorations. Aïda ranks among the best operas of Verdi. The plot is taken from old Egypt; and the music, with its eastern and somewhat sensuous coloring is exquisitely adapted to the scenery.

The scene of action is alternately Memphis and Thebes and the story belongs to the period when the Pharaohs sat on the throne.

In the first act we see the King's palace at Memphis. Ramphis, the Highpriest of Pharaoh announces to the Egyptian General Radamès, that the Ethiopians are in revolt and that the goddess Isis has decided who shall be leader of the army sent out against them. Radamès secretly hopes to be the elected, in order to win the Ethiopian slave Aïda, whom he loves, not knowing that she is a King's daughter.

Enter Amneris, daughter of Pharaoh. She loves Radamès without his knowledge and so does Aïda. Amneris, suspecting this, swears to avenge herself, should her suspicion prove correct.

The King's messenger announces, that Amonasro, the Ethiopian King (Aïda's father), is marching to the capital, and that Radamès is chosen to conquer the foe. Radamès goes to the temple to invoke the benediction of the goddess and to receive the sacred arms.

In the second act Amneris, in order to test Aïda's feelings, tells her, that Radamès fell in battle, and finds her doubts confirmed by Aïda's terror. Amneris openly threatens her rival, and both hasten to receive the soldiers, who return victorious. In Radamès suite walks King Amonasro, who has been taken prisoner, disguised as a simple officer. Aïda recognizes her father, and Amonasro, telling his conqueror, that the Ethiopian King has fallen, implores his clemency. Radamès, seeing Aïda in tears, adds his entreaties to those of the Ethiopian; and Pharaoh decides to set the prisoners free, with the exception of Aïda's father,

who is to stay with his daughter. Pharaoh then gives Amneris to Radamès as a recompense for his services.

In the third act Amonasro has discovered the mutual love of his daughter and Radamès and resolves to make use of it. While Amneris prays in the temple that her bridegroom may give his whole heart to her, Amonasro bids his daughter discover the secret of the Egyptian warplans from her lover. Amonasro hides himself, and Aïda has an interview with Radamès, in which he reveals all to her. She persuades him to fly with her, when Amonasro shows himself, telling him that he has heard all and confessing that he is the Ethiopian King. While they are speaking, Amneris overtakes and denounces them. Amonasro escapes with his daughter, Radamès remains in the hand of Ramphis, the high priest.

In the fourth act Radamès is visited in his cell by Amneris, who promises to save him from the awful death of being buried alive, if he renounces Aïda. But Radamès refuses, though she tells him, that Aïda has fled into her country, her father being slain on their flight.

Amneris at length regrets her jealousy and repents, but too late! Nothing can save Radamès, and she is obliged to see him led into his living tomb. Amneris curses the priests, who close the subterranean vaults with a rock. Radamès, preparing himself for death, discovers Aïda by his side. She has found means to penetrate into his tomb, resolved to die with her lover.

While she sinks into his arms, Amneris prays outside for Radamès' peace and eternal happiness.

ALESSANDRO STRADELLA.

Romantic opera in three acts by Flotow.

Text after the French by W. Friedrich.

Flotow, who composed this little opera when at Paris in the year 1844, that is long before his Martha, had the satisfaction of scoring a great success on the evening of its first representation in Hamburg. The pleasant impression then made by its agreable and lovely melodies has not faded the less that, after hearing many of our stormy and exciting modern operas, one often and ardently longs for the restful charm and guileless pleasure of a piece like this.

The libretto is interesting and touching, without being over-sensational.

Stradella, the celebrated Venetian singer has fallen in love with Leonore, ward of a rich Venetian citizen named Bassi. She returns his love, but is strictly guarded by her uncle, who wants to marry her himself. Stradella succeeds in deceiving Bassi and aided by his friend carries her off during the Carnival. In the second act we find the lovers in a little village near Rome, where a priest unites them for ever and gives them his benediction.

But Malvolio, a bandit, has sought them by Bassi's orders, and discovers their refuge. Entering the villa, where he finds open doors but no people, he meets with another bandit, in whom he recog-

nizes his friend Barbarino, also sent as it turns out on the same errand.

They decide to do the business together, that is to say: to kill Stradella, and to carry his wife back to her guardian. Under the mask of pilgrims going to a sacred festival, they find a kindly shelter in Stradella's house and are won by the latter's fine voice, as well as by the charm of his noble behaviour, so that they wholly abandon their evil purpose.

But in the third act Bassi appears, and not finding his order executed, offers such a large sum of gold to the banditti, that they at length promise to stab Stradella during his next singing performance. While they lie-in-wait for him, Stradella sings the hymn of the Holy Virgin's clemency towards sinners so touchingly, that his pursuers cast their swords away and sink on their knees, joining in the refrain. Full of astonishment Stradella learns of the danger in which he had been, but in the end he willingly pardons not only the banditti but also his wife's uncle, who, won over like the ruffians by the power of Stradella's song, humbly asks for the Singer's friendship, which is granted to him.

The people lead their favorite in triumph to the festival, which he helps to glorify with his wondrous voice.

ARMIDA.

Grand heroic opera in five acts by Gluck.
Text by Phil. Quinault.

The poet Quinault wrote the libretto of this opera for another composer, Lully, but almost one

hundred years later, Gluck, recognizing the genuine richness of this French production, availed himself of it for an opera, the music of which is so sublime, that it will for ever be considered classic.

The libretto is founded on an episode of Tasso's „Gerusalemme liberata".

The scene is laid in Damascus, where during the Crusade of the year 1099, the Crusaders have arrived at the palace and gardens of Armida, the Queen and enchantress. Rinaldc, the greatest hero in Godfrey of Bouillon's army, is the only one, who not only does not stoop to adore the beautiful Armida, but on the contrary pursues and hates her. He has been banished from Bouillon's presence charged with the rash deed of another knight, who has not dared to confess his guilt and he now wanders lonely in the forest.

Warned by a fellow-warrior, Artemidor, to avoid Armida's enchanting presence, he scorns the warning, saying that love for a woman is to him a thing unknown. In reality however Armida is already ensnaring him with her sorcery, he presently hears exquisitely sweet and dreamy melodies and finding himself in a soft, green valley, he lies down and falls asleep.

Armida's opportunity has come and she means to stab him, but love conquers hatred and the dagger sinks from her hand. She vainly invokes the furies of hate; none can change her passion for the hero and at last, ceasing to strive against her tender feelings, she surrenders herself entirely to him and even succeeds by her charms and her devotion in

enthralling him. Meanwhile Bouillon has sent two of his knights, Ubalt and a Danish warrior, to recall Rinaldo to his duty. They are detained by Armida's witchery; the Danish knight meets a demon, who has taken his bride's face and tenderly calls him to her, but Ubalt destroys the charm and both succeed in approaching Rinaldo, who, his love-dream dissipated by the call of honor, resolves to return to the army with his companions. In vain Armida tries to change his resolution. In despair she curses him and her love, but being unable to kill the man she loves, she suffers him to go away and turns her beautiful palace and gardens into a desert.

DER WAFFENSCHMIED.
(THE ARMORER).

Comic opera in three acts by Albert Lortzing.
Text by himself.

Though this opera does not equal in value Lortzing's „Czar and Zimmermann", it has nevertheless proved an admirable addition to the operatic repertory. It is attractive both on account of the freshness of its melodies and the popular character of its music and text.

The scene is located in Worms, in the 16th century. The Count of Liebenau has fallen in love with Mary, the daughter of a celebrated armorer, named Stadinger, and in order to win her, he woos her at first in his own rank as Count, then in the guise of a smith-journeyman, named Conrad. Mary, who cannot permit herself to think of love

in connection with a person of such a position as a Count, nevertheless pities him and at last confesses blushing, that she loves the poor smith Conrad. Inwardly triumphant, the Count pretends to be jealous. But father Stadinger, who more than once showed the door to the Count, will not accept either of the suitors, the Count standing too high above him, and his journeyman, Conrad, being too bad a laborer, though he has once saved Mary's life.

In order to withdraw her from the reach of her lovers, the armorer resolves to wed his daughter to his second journeyman George, who is no other than the Count's valet. Stadinger is determined to present him as Mary's bridegroom on the occasion of a festival, which is to take place in the course of the afternoon, and on which Stadinger's jubilee as master of armorers is to be celebrated. In vain George refuses his consent to this proposal. He is at length obliged to inform the Count and the latter feigns to assault Stadinger's house. But it is of no avail; the old citizen, more firm than ever, denies him his child again, and as George decidedly refuses to marry his daughter, he gives her at last to Conrad. Great is Mary's surprise and her father's wrath, when they discover that the Count and simple Conrad are one and the same person, but at last the old father yields, and the lovers receive his benediction.

BALLO IN MASCHERA

or

GUSTAVUS THE THIRD.

Grand historic opera in five acts by Auber.

Text by Scribe.

This opera has had a curious fate, its historical background having excited resistance and given rise to scruples. The murder of a king was not thought a fit subject for an opera, and so the libretto was altered and spoilt.

The Italians simply changed the names and the scene of action; Verdi composed a new opera from the same matter and succeeded admirably; nevertheless Auber's composition is preferred in Germany, Scribe's libretto being by far the better, while the music is original and vivacious as well as full of pleasant harmony and fine instrumentation.

The scene is laid in Stockholm in the year 1792. Gustavus the third, King of Sweden, loves the wife of his friend and counsellor Ankarström, and is loved in return, both struggling vainly against this sinful passion. Ankarström has detected a plot against the King's life, and warning him, asks that the traitor be punished, but Gustavus refuses to listen, trusting in his people and in his friend's fidelity. His minister Kaulbart desires him to condemn a sorceress named Arvedson, who is said to be able at will by means of certain herbs and potions to cause persons to love or hate each other. The King refuses to banish the woman unheard and decides to visit her. Ankarström tries to dissuade, but the King insists, and accordingly goes

to Arvedson in disguise. During the witch's conjuration Malwina, his lady-love appears, who seeks help from the sorceress against her forbidden passion. The concealed King hears Arvedson tell her to go at midnight and gather a herb, which grows on the graves of criminals, and triumphant in his knowledge of Malwina's confessed love, Gustavus decides to follow her there.

When she has gone, he mockingly orders the witch to tell him his fortune, and hears from her that he shall be killed by the man, who first tenders him his hand. Just then Ankarström who comes to protect the King against his enemy, enters and they shake hands.

In the third act Malwina meets the King on the dismal spot, to which she had been directed, but Ankarström, whose watchful fidelity never suffers him to be far from the King, and who is utterly ignorant of the deception being practised upon him, saves the lovers from further guilt. After a severe conflict with himself, Gustavus consents to fly in his friend's cloak, Ankarström having pledged his honor not to ask the veiled lady's secret, and to conduct her safely back to the city. This plan is frustrated by the conspirators, who rush in and are about to attack the Count. Malwina throws herself between him and the combatants, and the husband then recognizes in the King's companion his own wife. Full of indignation he turns from her and joins the conspirators, promising to be one of them.

He swears to kill his unhappy wife, but not until another has first fallen.

In the fourth act the conspirators have a meeting in Ankarström's house, where they decide to murder the King. The lots being cast, the duty to strike the death-blow falls on Ankarström, and Malwina herself draws the fatal paper. At this moment an invitation to a masked ball is brought by the King's page Oscar, and the conspirators resolve to take advantage of this opportunity for the execution of their design.

In the last act the King, happy to know Malwina safe from discovery, resolves to sacrifice his love to honor and friendship. He is about to give Ankarström the proof of his friendship, by naming him governor of Finland, and the minister is to depart with his wife on the morning after the ball. Meanwhile the King is warned by a missive from an unknown hand, not to appear at the ball, but he disregards it. He meets Malwina at the ball. His page, thinking to do the King a service, has betrayed his mask to Ankarström. Malwina warns the prince, but in vain, for while he presents her with the paper, which is to send her and her husband to their own beloved country, Ankarström shoots him through the heart. Gustavus dies, pardoning his murderer.

IL BARBIERE DI SEVIGLIA.

Comic opera in two acts by Rossini.

This opera may be called a miracle of Rossini's creation, as it not only is his best work, but was written by him in a fortnight, a performance nearly

incredible, for the music is so finely worked out, and so elegant, that the opera has grown to be favorite with all nations.

The subject, taken from Beaumarchais' witty trilogy of „Figaros" had ere this lent inspiration to more than one composer; Mozart's „Figaro", though done before the „Barbiere" is in a certain sense the continuation of Rossini's opera.

The Barbiere had the peculiar misfortune, to experience an utter reverse on the occasion of its first representation. It was composed for the Duke Cesarini, proprietor of the Argentina theatre in Rome, and the cabals and intrigues of Paësiello's partisans (who had composed the same subject) turned the balance in Rossini's disfavor. But on the second evening good taste prevailed, and since then the opera has been a universal favorite.

Beaumarchais' tale was worked out anew by the Roman poet, Sterbini; in our opera it runs as follows:

Count Almaviva is enamoured of Rosina, the ward of Doctor Bartolo. She is most jealously guarded by the old man, who wishes to make her his own wife. In vain the Count serenades her; she does not appear, and he must needs invent some other means of obtaining his object. Making the acquaintance of the lighthearted and cunning barber Figaro, the latter advises him to get entrance into Bartolo's house in the guise of a soldier, possessing a billet of quartering for his lodgings Rosina herself has not failed to hear the sweet love-songs of the Count, known to her only under the simple

name of Lindoro: and with southern passion, and the lightheartedness, which characterizes all the persons who figure in this opera, but which is not to be mistaken for frivolity, Rosina loves her nice lover and is willing to be his own. Figaro has told her of Almaviva's love, and in return she gives him a note, which she has written in secret. But the old Doctor is a sly fox, he has seen the inky little finger, and determines to keep his eyes open.

When the Count appears in the guise of a half-drunken dragoon, the Doctor sends Rosina away, and tries to put the soldier out of the house, pretending to have a license against all billets. The Count resists, and while Bartolo seeks for his license, makes love to Rosina, but after the Doctor's return there arises such an uproar, that all the neighbors and finally the guards appear, who counsel the Count to retire for once.

In the second act the Count gains entrance to Bartolo's house as a singing-master who is deputed to give a lesson instead of the feverstricken Basilio. Of course the music-lesson is turned into a love-lesson.

When all seems to be going well, the real Maëstro, Basilio, enters and all but frustrates their plans. With gold and promises Figaro bribes him to retreat, and the lovers agree to flee on the coming night.

Almost at the last moment the cunning of Bartolo hinders the projected elopement, he shows a letter, which Rosina has written, and makes Rosina believe that her lover, whom she only knows as

Lindoro, in concert with Figaro is betraying her to the Count. Great is her joy, when she detects, that Lindoro and Count Almaviva are one and the same person, and that he loves her as truly as ever. — They bribe the old notary, who has been sent for by Bartolo to arrange his own (Bartolo's) wedding with Rosina. Bartolo signs the contract of marriage, with Figaro as witness, and detects too late that he has been duped, and that he has himself united the lovers. At last he submits with pretty good grace to the inevitable, and contents himself with Rosina's dowry, which the Count generously transfers to him.

BENVENUTO CELLINI.

Opera in three acts by Hector Berlioz.

Text by de Wailly and Barbier, translated into German by Peter Cornelius.

This opera by the spirited French musician has had a singular fate. Composed more than forty years ago it never had the success it merited in France; a „succes d'estime" was the only result. Liszt, who was the saviour of many a talented struggler was the first to recognize the genius of the French composer. He brought the opera out upon the stage at Weimar, but without much success. Berlioz was not understood by the public. Devrient in Carlsruhe tried a similar experiment and failed, and so the opera was almost forgotten, until Germany remembering the duty owed to genius of whatever nationality it may be, placed it upon the stage in Dresden, on the 4th of Nov. 1888 under the leader-

ship one of the ablest of modern interpreters of music, Director Schuch. — Its representation was a triumph. Though Berlioz can in nowise be compared with Wagner, whose music is much more realistic and sensual, Wagner may nevertheless be said to have opened up a path for Berlioz' style, which though melodious differs widely from that of the easy, flowing Italian school, being more serious as well as more difficult for the musical novice to understand. This explains, why Berlioz' compatriots esteemed, but never liked him; he was too scientific. To-day our ears and understanding are better prepared for striking intervals and complicated orchestration, which latter is the most brilliant feature in the opera.

Indeed the instrumentation is simply perfect, the choruses are master-pieces of originality, life and melody, and the rythm with its syncopes, is so remarkable, that one is more than justified in calling the style unique; it is Berlioz and no other.

The text is far less good than the music, though the hero, whose life Goethe found worthy of description in the 24^{h} and 25th volume of his works, might well interest. — The libretto is by no means strictly historical, and suffers from improbabilities, which can only be excused in an opera.

The tale is laid in Rome in the year 1532 under Pope Clement VII, and comprises the events of three days, Monday before Shrove-tide, Shrove-Tuesday and Ash-Wednesday. — Benvenuto Cellini, the Tuscan goldsmith has been called to Rome by

the Pope, in order to embellish the city with his masterpieces. He loves Teresa. the daughter of the old papal treasurer Balducci, and the love is mutual. — At the same time another suitor, Fieramosca. the Pope's sculptor, is favored by her father. Old Balducci grumbles in the first scene at the Pope's predilection for Cellini, declaring that such an excellent sculptor as Fieramosca ought to suffice. He goes for a walk and Cellini finds Teresa alone. To save her from Fieramosca he plans an elopement, selecting the close of the Carnival as the time best suited for carrying out their design. The rendez-vous is to be the Piazza di Colonna, where he will wait for her, disguised as a monk in white, accompanied by a Capuchin, his pupil Ascanio. — Unhappily the rival Fieramosca has entered unseen, and overheard all. The ensuing terzetto is a masterpiece. While the lovers are bidding each other farewell Balducci returns; and Cellini has scarcely time to hide behind the window-curtain before he enters. The father is surprised to find his daughter still up and Teresa, seeking for an excuse to send him away, feigns to be frightened by a thief in her chamber. There Balducci finds the hapless Fieramosca hidden and Cellini meanwhile escapes. Balducci and his daughter calling for help, all the female servants and women of the neighborhood appear armed with brooms and wooden spoons. They fall upon the hapless lover and finally force him to escape through the window.

In the second act we find Cellini in a tavern with his pupils and friends. They have no money

left to pay for their wine, when Ascanio brings gold from the Pope, which however he only delivers after Cellini has given a solemn promise to finish at once the statue of Perseus he is engaged upon. Great is the general wrath, when they find the money consist of but a paltry sum, and they resolve to avenge themselves on the avaricious treasurer Balducci, by personating him in the theatre. Fieramosca, who has again been eaves-dropping turns for help to his friend Pompeo, a bravo. — And they decide to outwit Cellini, by adopting the same costumes as he and his pupil.

The scene changes; we see the Piazza di Colonna and the theatre, in which the pantomime of King Midas is acted. Balducci who is there with his daughter among the spectators recognizes in the snoring King a portrait of himself and furiously advances to grapple with him. Cellini profits by the ensuing tumult to approach Teresa, but at the same time Fieramosca comes up with Pompeo, and Teresa cannot discern which is the true lover, owing to the masks. — A fight ensues, in which Cellini stabs Pompeo. He is arrested and Teresa flies with the Capuchin Ascanio to Cellini's atelier. The enraged people are about to lynch the murderer, when three cannon-shots are fired announcing that it is Ash-Wednesday; the lights are extinguished and Cellini escapes in the darkness.

The third act represents Cellini's atelier with the workmen in it. Teresa, not finding her lover, is in great distress. Ascanio consoles her, and

when the Miserere of the Penitents is heard, both join in the prayer to the Holy Virgin.

Suddenly Cellini rushes in, and embracing Teresa, relates that he fled the night before into a house. A procession of penitent monks passing by in the morning, he joined them, as their white cowls were similar to his own disguise. He decides to escape at once to Florence with Teresa, but is already pursued by Balducci, who appears with Fieramosca and insists on his daughter's returning and marrying the latter. At this moment the Cardinal Salviati steps in to look for the statue. He is highly indignant, that Cellini, thoughtless like all artists, has not kept his promise. Hearing him moreover accused by Balducci, he threatens severe punishment and finally declares that Perseus shall be cast by another. — Cellini in the pride of genius and full of rage seizes a hammer, and, surrounded by his workmen declares, that he will rather destroy his work than see it finished by another.

The Cardinal overcome by fear of the loss, changes his tactics, and in compliance with Cellini's request promises him full pardon and Teresa's hand, if he finishes Perseus in an hour's time, as Cellini offers to do. — Should he fail in his gigantic task, his life will be forfeit.

All set to work at once; even Fieramosca at the Cardinal's request assists. More and more metal is demanded; Cellini sacrifices all his masterpieces in gold and silver. At last the casting is completed, Cellini breaks the mould and the statue of Perseus shines faultlesly forth, a wonder of art,

a thing of glory bringing immortality to its maker. All present bend before the greatness of genius and Fieramosca, the rival in art and love is the first to kiss and embrace Cellini, who obtains full pardon and the hand of Teresa along with her father's blessing.

BY ORDER OF HIS HIGHNESS.

(AUF HOHEN BEFEHL)

Comic opera in three acts by Carl Reinecke.

Text by the composer after Riehl's novel:

„Ovidius at court."

Reinecke of Leipzig is known both as excellent pianist and composer of no ordinary talent. The Dresden theatre has been one of the first to put the new opera upon its boards and with regard to the music, the expectations entertained have been fully realised.

It is true music, melodious and beautiful. Reinecke's musical language free, untrammelled and suggestive, only assumes decided form in the character of a song, or when several voices are united. The instrumentation is very interesting and the popular melody remarkably well characterized.

So he introduces for instance the wellknown popular song: „Kein Feuer, keine Kohle (no fire, no coal can burn) with the most exquisite variations.

The libretto is not as perfect as the music, being rather improbable.

A little German Residential Capital of the last century forms the background to the picture.

Franz, the son of the Organist Ignaz Laemml, introduces himself to Dal Segno the celebrated

Italian singing-master as the Bohemian singer Howora. He obtains lessons from the capricious old man, who however fails to recognize in him the long-absent son of his old enemy. Cornelia, Dal Segno's daughter however is not so slow in recognizing the friend of her childhood, who loves her and has all her love, as we presently learn. Franz has only taken the name of Howora, in order to get into favor with the maiden's father, an endeavour in which he easily succeeds owing to his musical talents.

Meanwhile the Prince is determined to have an opera composed from Ovid's metamorphoses. He has chosen Pyramus and Thisbe, but as the Princess is of a very gay disposition, a request is made that the tragedy have a happy solution, a whim which puts old pedantic Laemml quite out of sorts.

In the second act Louis, one of the princely lackeys, brings a large cracknel and huge paper-cornet of sweets for Cornelia, whom he courts and whose favor he hopes in this way to win.

When he is gone, Dal Segno's sister Julia, lady's-maid to the Princess, enters with birthday-presents for her niece Cornelia, and among the things which attract her attentions sees the cracknel beside which she finds a note from her own faithless lover Louis. Filled with righteous indignation she takes it away.

Cornelia stepping out to admire her birthday-presents meets Franz, and after a tender scene, the young man tells his lady-love, that he has been fortunate enough to invent for his father a happy

issue to the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe, and that they may now hope the best from the grateful old master.

Meanwhile good old Laemml himself appears to ask his old enemy Dal Segno to give singing-lessons to his dear son. The Italian teacher is very rude and ungracious. Laemml's blood rises also and a fierce quarrel ensues, which is interrupted by the arrival of the Prince. Having heard their complaints, he decides that the quarrel is to be settled by a singing competition in which Howora, Dal Segno's new and greatly praised pupil, and Franz, Laemml's son, are to contest for the laurels. Both masters are content and decide on a duet for tenor and soprano. This is a happy choice and Franz, who with Cornelia has heard everything, causes his lady-love to disguise herself, in order to play the part of Franz, while he decides to appear as Howora.

In the third act the Princess receives old Laemml, who comes to tell her, that he has complied with her wishes as to the happy issue of the tale and confides to her his son's secret, that Franz and Howora are one and the same person. — The gracious Princess promises her assistance, and Laemml leaves her very happy, dancing and merry-making with the Prince's fool. —

In the evening Louis finds Julia attired in Cornelia's dress, and believing her to be her niece, he places a ring on her finger and once more pledges his faith to his old love.

The two singers perform their duet so perfectly,

that Laemml, uncertain who will obtain the prize begs for a solo. Each-one then sings a popular song, (Volkslied) and all agree that Howora has triumphed. The happy victor is crowned with the laurels. But the Princess, touched by the sweet voice of the other singer puts a rose-wreath on his brow. When the cap is taken off, Dal Segno perceives that the pretended Franz has the curls of his own daughter. — Howora being presented to him as Laemml's son, he can do no other than yield. He embraces old Laemml and gives his benediction to the lovers.

CARLO BROSCHI

or

THE DEVIL'S PART.

Comic opera in three acts by Auber.

Text by Scribe.

This composition might rather be called a Vaudeville with musical accompaniment, than an opera. The music is not above mediocrity, though we find many pleasing and even exquisite melodies in it. That it has held its present place on the stage for the past forty years is due principally to its excellent libretto, which is full of comical and ingenious situations. The principal role is given to Carlo Broschi. He is no other than the famous singer Farinelli, who as a matter of fact did heal a Spanish King from madness, though it was not Ferdinand VI., but his predecessor Philip V., the husband of Elisabeth of Ferrara. Notwithstanding these anachronisms the libretto ranks with the best.

Carlo Broschi has placed his only sister Casilda in a convent near Madrid, to save her from the persecutions of the clergy, who have been trying for reasons of their own to give the beautiful maiden to the King. Casilda confesses to her brother that she is in love with an unknown cavalier, who entertains a like passion for her, but Carlo, a poor minstrel, considers that his sister, a milliner, does not stand high enough in the social scale to permit a lawful union with a nobleman.

Carlo meets the King accidentally. He has fallen into deep melancholy, and Carlo succeeds in cheering him by singing an old romance, which he learnt from his mother. Both King and Queen are full of gratitude, and Carlo soon finds himself at court and loaded with honors. In his new position he meets with Raphael d'Estuniga, Casilda's lover.

In despair at having lost his lady-love he is about to appeal to the Devil for help, when Carlo appears, presenting himself as Satan. He promises his help on condition that Raphael shall give him one half of all his winnings. This is a condition easily accepted, and Raphael is made a Court official through Carlo's influence.

Meanwhile the clergy vainly try to ensnare the King again; Carlo is like his better self; he disperses his Sire's melancholy by singing to him and rekindles his interest in government.

Raphael, feeling quite secure in his league with the devil, begins to play; he is fortunate, but Carlo never fails to claim the share, which is willingly surrendered to him.

All at once Casilda appears on the scene, to put herself under the protection of her brother, the priests having found out her refuge. She recognizes the King, and tells her brother that it was he, to whom she was taken against her will. The King believes her to be a ghost and his reason threatens to give way, but Carlo assures him that the girl is living. The Queen, who knows nothing of her husband's secret, here interrupts the conversation and bids Carlo follow her.

Meanwhile Raphael and Casilda have an interview, but the King comes suddenly upon them and at once orders Raphael to be put to death, the latter having failed in the reverence due to his sovereign. Raphael however trusting in the Devil's help does not let his spirits sink and Carlo actually saves him by telling the King, that Casilda is Raphael's wife.

But the Grand-Inquisitor succeeds in discovering this untruth, and in exciting the King's anger against his favorite. Carlo, much embarassed, obtains an interview with the King, and confessing the whole truth assures him, that the Queen knows as yet nothing and implores him to give his thoughts and his affections once more to her and to his country. The King, touched to generosity, gives his benediction to the lovers, together with a new title for Raphael, who is henceforth to be called Count of Puycerda. Now at last Raphael learns that the so-called devil is his bride's brother, who tells him that this time his share lies in making two lovers happy, a share which gives him both pleasure and content.

CARMEN.

Opera in four acts by George Bizet.

This opera is essentially Spanish. The music throughout has a southern character and is passionate and original to a high degree.

Carmen, the heroine is a Spanish gipsy, fickle and wayward, but endowed with all the wild graces of her nation. She is adored by her people, and so it is not to be wondered at, that she has many of the stronger sex at her feet. She is betrothed to Don José, a brigadier of the Spanish army: of course he is one out of many; she soon grows tired of him, and awakens his jealousy by a thousand caprices and cruelties.

Don José has another bride, sweet and lovely, Micaëla, waiting for him at home, but she is forgotten as soon as he sees the proud gipsy.

Micaëla seeks him out, bringing to him the portrait and the benediction of his mother, ay, even her kiss, which she gives him with blushes. His tenderness is gone, however, so far as Micaëla is concerned, as soon as he casts one look into the lustrous eyes of Carmen. This passionate creature has involved herself in a quarrel and wounded one of her companions, a laborer in a cigarette manufactory. She is to be taken to prison, but Don José lets her off, promising to meet her in the evening at an inn kept by a man named Lillas Pastia, where they are to dance the Seguedilla.

In the second act we find them there together, with the whole band of gipsies. Don José, more

and more infatuated by Carmen's charms, is willing to join the vagabonds, who are at the same time smugglers. He accompanies them in a dangerous enterprise of this kind, but no sooner has he submitted to sacrifice love and honor for the gipsy, than she begins to tire of his attentions. José has pangs of conscience, he belongs to another sphere of society and his feelings are of a softer kind than those of nature's unruly child. She transfers her affections to a bull-fighter named Escamillo, another of her suitors, who returns her love more passionately. A quarrel ensues between the two rivals, Escamillo's knife breaks and he is about to be killed by Don José, when Carmen intervenes, holding back his arm. Don José, seeing that she has duped him, now becomes her deadly foe, filled with undying hatred and longing for revenge.

Micaëla, the tender-hearted maiden, who follows him everywhere like a guardian-angel, reminds him of his lonely mother; everybody advises him to let the fickle Carmen alone, — Carmen who never loved the same man for more than six weeks. But in vain, till Micaëla tells him of the dying mother, asking incessantly for her son; then at last he consents to go with her, but not without wild imprecations on his rival and his faithless love.

In the fourth act we find ourselves in Madrid. There is to be a bull-fight; Escamillo, its hero, has invited the whole company to be present in the circus.

Don José appears there too, trying for the last time to regain his bride. Carmen, though warned

SATURDAY MATINEE at 2.00 o'clock.

"CARMEN,"

Grand Opera in Four Acts by GEORGES BIZET.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Don Jose, a Brigadier		Mr. Wegener
Escamillo, a Toreador		Mr. Marsano
Il Dancairo	Smugglers	Mr. Lawrence
Il Remendado	Smugglers	Mr. Jungman
Zuniga, a Captain		Mr. Boyle
Morales, a Brigadier		Mr. Fulton
Michaela, a Peasant Girl		Miss Rennyson
Frasquita	Gypsy Friends	Miss Farm
Mercedes	Gypsy Friends	Miss James
Carmen, a Cigarette Girl, afterwards a gypsy		Miss Ivell
Conductor		Mr. Salvatore
Stage Manager		Mr. Evans

Gypsies, Soldiers, Smugglers, Peasants, Cigarette Girls and Toreadors.

The Scene is in Spain about 1820.

SYNOPSIS.

ACT I.—A Square in Seville.
ACT II.—The Tavern of Lillias Pastia.
ACT III.—A Rocky Pass in the Mountains.
ACT IV.—A Street in Seville outside the Plaza de Toros

COSI FAN TUTTE.

Comic opera in two acts by Mozart.

Text by Da Ponte, newly arranged by L. Schneider and Ed. Devrient.

This opera, though lovely in its way, has never had the success, which the preceding Figaro and Don Juan attained, and this is due for the most part to the libretto. In the original text it really shows female fickleness, and justifies its title. But the more Mozart's music was admired, the less could one be satisfied with such a libretto. Schneider and Devrient therefore altered it and in their version the two female lovers are put to the test, but midway in the plot it is revealed to them that they are being tried —, with the result that they feign faithlessness,

play the part out and at the close declare their knowledge, turning the sting against the authors of the unworthy comedy. The contents may be told shortly.

Don Fernando and Don Alvar are betrothed to two Andalusian ladies, Rosaura and Isabella.

They loudly praise their ladies' fidelity, when an old bachelor, named Onofrio, pretends that their sweet-hearts are not better than other women and accessible to temptation. The lovers agree to make the trial and promise to do everything which Onofrio dictates. Thereupon they announce to the ladies, that they are ordered to Havannah with their regiment, and after a tender leavetaking, they depart to appear again in another guise, as officers of a strange regiment. Onofrio has won the ladies-maid, Dolores, to aid in the furtherance of his schemes and the officers enter, beginning at once to make love to Isabella and Rosaura, but each, as was before agreed, to the other's affianced.

Of course the ladies reject them, and the lovers begin to triumph, when Onofrio prompts them to try another temptation. The strangers, mad with love, pretend to drink poison in the young ladies' presence. Of course these tenderhearted maidens are much aggrieved; they call Dolores, who bids her mistresses hold the patients in their arms; then coming disguised as a physician, she gives them an antidote. By this clumsy subterfuge they excite the ladies' pity and are nearly successful in their foolish endeavours, when Dolores, pitying the cruelly tested women, reveals the whole plot to them.

Isabella and Rosaura now resolve to enter into the play. They accept the disguised suitors, and even consent to a marriage. Dolores appears in the shape of a notary, without being recognized by the men. The marriage-contract is signed, and the lovers disappear to return in their true characters, full of righteous contempt. Isabella and Rosaura make believe to be conscience-stricken, and for a long while torment and deceive their angry bridegrooms. But at last they grow tired of teasing, they present the disguised Dolores, and they put their lovers to shame by showing that all was a farce. Of course the gentlemen humbly ask their pardon, and old Onofrio is obliged to own himself beaten.

CZAR AND ZIMMERMANN
or
THE TWO PETERS.

Comic opera in three acts by Lortzing.

This charming little opera had even more success than Lortzing's other compositions; it is a popular opera in the best sense of the word. Lortzing ought to have made his fortune by it, for it was soon claimed by every stage. He had composed it for Christmas 1837 and in the year 1838 every street-organ played its principal melodies. But the directors paid miserable sums to the lucky composer. (F. e. a copy of the work cost him 25 thalers, while he did not get more than 30 to 50 thalers from the directors.)

The libretto was composed by Lortzing himself; he took it out of an old comedy.

Peter, Emperor of Russia, has taken service on the wharfs of Saardam as simple ship-carpenter under the assumed name of Peter Michaelow. Among his companions is another Peter, named Ivanow, a Russian renegade, who has fallen in love with Mary, the niece of the burgomaster van Bett.

The two Peters being countrymen and fearing discovery, have become friendly, but Ivanow instinctively feeling his friend's superiority, is jealous of him, and Mary, a little coquette, nourishes his passion.

Meanwhile the ambassadors of France and England, each of whom wishes for a special connection with the Czar of Russia, have discovered where he must be, and both bribe the conceited simpleton van Bett, who tries to find out the real Peter.

He assembles the people, but there are many Peters amongst them, though only two strangers. He asks them whence they come, then takes aside Peter Ivanow, cross-questioning him in vain as to what he wishes to know.

At last, being aware of Peter's love for Mary, he gives him some hope of gaining her hand, and obtains in exchange a promise from the young man, to confess his secret in presence of the foreign nobleman. — The cunning French ambassador, the Marquis de Chateauneuf, has easily found out the Czar and gained his purpose, while the phlegmatic English Lord, falsely directed by the burgomaster, is still in transaction with Ivanow. All this takes place during a rural festivity, where the Marquis notwithstanding

the claims upon his attention finds time to court yet pretty Mary, exciting Ivanow's hate and jealousy. Ivanow with difficulty plays the role of Czar, which personage he is supposed to be as well by Lord Syndham as by van Bett. He well knows, that he deserves punishment, if he is found out on either side. The burgomaster, getting more and more confused, and fearing himself surrounded by spies and cheats, examines one of the strangers after the other, and is of course confounded to hear their high-flown names; at last he seizes the two Peters, but is deterred from his purpose by the two ambassadors. They are now joined by a third, the Russian General Lefort, who comes to call back his Sovereign to his own country. In the third act van Bett has prepared a solemn demonstration of fealty for the supposed Czar, whom he still mistakes for the real one, while the real Czar has found means to go on board of his ship with the Marquis and Lefort. — Before taking farewell, he promises a pass-port to Ivanow, who is very dubious as to what will become of him. Meanwhile van Bett approaches him with his procession to do homage, but during his long and confused speech cannon-shots are heard and an usher announces, that Peter Michaelow is about to sail away with a large crew. The back-ground opens and shows the port with the Czar's ship. Everybody bursts into shouts „Long live the Czar!" and Ivanow, opening the paper, which his high-born friend left to him, reads that the Czar grants him pardon for his desertion and bestows upon him a considerable sum of money.

LA DAME BLANCHE.

Comic opera in three acts by Boildieu.

Text by Scribe.

Boildieu, born 1775 in Rouen, died 1834 in Jarly near Paris, is for the French almost what Mozart was for the German. This opera especially may be called classic, so deliberate and careful is its execution.

The „Lady in white" is the chef-d'oeuvre of all comic operas in French, as Mozart's Figaro is in German. The success of this opera, whose composer and whose poet were equally liked and esteemed in Paris was enormous, and since then it never lost its attraction.

The scene is laid in Scotland, the subject being taken from Walter Scott's romance: „Guy Mannering".

George Brown, the hero of the opera, a young lieutenant in English service, visits Scotland. He is hospitably received by a tenant of the late Count Avenel, who has been dead for some years. When he arrives, the baptism of the tenants youngest child is just being celebrated, and seeing that they lack a godfather, he good-naturedly consents to take the vacant place.

Seeing the old castle of the Avenels, he asks for its history, and the young wife Jenny tells him that according to the traditions of the place it is haunted by a ghost, as is the case in almost every old castle. This apparition is called the „white Lady", but unlike other ghosts she is good, protecting her sex against fickle men. All the people around believe firmly in her and pretend to have

seen her themselves. In the castle there exists a statue, which bears the name of this benevolent genius, and in it the old Lord has hidden treasures. His steward Gaveston, a rogue, who has taken away the only son of the Count in the child's earliest days, brings the castle with all its acres to public sale, hoping to gain it for himself.

He has a charming ward, named Anna. It is she, who sometimes plays the part of the white Lady. She has summoned the young tenant Dickson, who is sincerely devoted to her, into the castle, and the young man though full of fear, yet dare not disobey the ghostly commands.

George Brown, thirsting for a good adventure, and disbelieving in the ghost-story, declares that he will go in Dickson's place.

In the second act George, who has found entrance into the castle, calls for the white Lady, who appears in the shape of Anna. She believes that Dickson is before her and she reveals her secret to him, imploring his help against her false guardian Gaveston, who means to rob the true and only heir of his property. She knows that the missing son of the d'Avenels is living, and she has given a promise to the dying Countess, to defend his rights against the rapacious Gaveston. George gives his hand to the pretended ghost in token of fidelity, and the warm and soft hand which clasps his, awakes tender feelings in him. On the following morning Dickson and his wife Jenny are full of curiosity about George's visit, but he does not breathe a word of his secret.

The sale of the castle as previously announced is to begin, and Dickson has been empowered beforehand by all the neighboring farmers, to bid the highest price, in order not to let it fall into the hands of the hateful Gaveston. They bid higher and higher, but at length Dickson stops, unable to go farther. Gaveston feels assured of triumph, when George Brown, recalling his vow to the white Lady, advances boldly, bidding one thousand pounds more. Anna is beside him, in the shape of the spectre, and George obediently bids on, till the castle is his for the price of three hundred thousand pounds. — Gaveston in a perfect fury, swears to avenge himself on the adventurer, who is to pay the sum in the afternoon. Should he prove unable to do so, he shall be put into prison. George, who firmly believes in the help of his genius, is quietly confident, and meanwhile makes an inspection of the castle. Wandering through the vast rooms, dim recollections arise in him, and hearing the minstrel's song of the Avenels, he all at once remembers and finishes the romance, which he heard in his childhood.

The afternoon comes and with it Mac-Irton, the justice of peace. He wants the money, and George begs to await the white Lady, who promised her help. Anna appears, bringing the treasure of the Avenels hidden in the statue, and with them some documents, which prove the just claims of Edwin Count Avenel. This long lost Count she recognizes in George Brown, whose identity with the playmate of her youth she had found out the night before. Gaveston approaches full of wrath

to tear aside the ghost's white veil, and sees his own ward, Anna.

The happy owner of castle and country holds firm to the promise which he gave the white Lady, and offers hand and heart to the faithful Anna, who has loved him from her childhood.

IL DEMONIO.

Fantastic opera in three acts by Anton Rubinstein.
Text after the Russian of Alfred Offermann.

This opera of the great Russian musician has an entirely national character. The great features of Rubinstein's work are most fertile imagination and an immense power of expression, which however sometimes almost passes the permitted bounds, although the forms are perfectly mastered and the fanciful subject is well calculated to afford it room for play. It is taken from the celebrated poem of Lermontoff, and it treats of the devices, by which Satan seeks to ensnare the immortal souls on earth.

The plot is laid in Grusia in the Caucasus.

The first scene represents a wild and lonely country, in the raging storm voices are heard of good and bad spirits alternately. The Arch-Fiend appears, weary of everything, even of his power. He curses the world; in vain he is warned by the Angel of light to cease his strife against Heaven; the Demon's only satisfaction lies in opposition to and battle with all that is loving and good.

He sees Tamara, daughter of Prince Gudal, who expects her bridegroom, the Prince of Sinodal, and full of admiration for her loveliness he wooes her.

Tamara, frightened calls her companions and they all return to the castle, but the words of the stranger, whom she has recognized by the halo of light surrounding him, as a being from a higher world, vibrate in her ears: „Queen of my love, thou shalt be the Empress of Worlds."

The following scene shows Prince Sinodal, encamping for the night with his suite; the roughness of the way has delayed his coming to Tamara. Near the camp is a chapel, erected in memory of one of his ancestors, who was slain there by a ruffian and the Prince's old servant admonishes him to pray for his soul. To his destruction he postpones it till morning, for during his sleep the Demon brings up his enemies, the Tartars, and the Prince's caravan is robbed and he himself killed.

In the second act Tamara stands ready to receive her bridegroom, whose coming has been announced to her by a messenger.

Tamara's thoughts are with the stranger, though against her will, when an escort brings the dead body of Sinodal. While the poor bride is giving vent to her sorrow and her father seeks to comfort her by offering religious consolation, she again hears the voice of the Demon, whispering soft seductions to her. At last she feels that her strength is failing before a supernatural power, and so she begs her father to let her enter a monastery. After offering many objections he finally consents, for in truth his thoughts are only of avenging his children.

In the third act the Demon, who really loves Tamara, and regrets his wickedness, seeks to see

her. The Angel of Light denies him the entrance, which however he finally forces. Passionately he invokes Tamara's pity and her love and she, rent by unutterable feelings implores Heaven's aid, but her strength gives way, and the Demon embraces and kisses her. At this moment the Angel of Light appears, and Tamara is about to hasten to him, when with a loud cry she sinks down lifeless. Satan has lost; despairing and cursing all, he vanishes, and a thunder-bolt destroys the cloister, from amid the ruins of which the Angels bear the poor love-tortured Tamara to Heaven.

LE DOMINO NOIR.

Comic opera in three acts by Auber.

Text by Scribe.

This is one of the most charming comic operas, which were ever written by this master. Graceful archness and elegance of style are its characteristics, and these lose nothing from the presence of a gay and easy temper which makes itself felt throughout. The same may be said of the libretto.

The plot is well worked out and entertaining. The scene is laid in Madrid in our century.

The Queen of Spain gives a masqued ball, at which our heroine Angela is present, accompanied by her companion Brigitta. There she is seen by Horatio di Massarena, a young nobleman, who had met her a year before at one of these balls and fell in love with, without knowing her.

This time he detains her, but is again unable to discover her real name, and confessing his love

for her, he receives the answer, that she can be no more than a friend to him. Massarena detains her so long that the clock strikes the midnight-hour as Angela prepares to seek her companion. Massarena confesses to having removed Brigitta under some pretext, and Angela in despair cries out, that she is lost. She is in reality member of a convent, and destined to be Lady-Abbess, though she has not yet taken the vows. She is very highly connected, and has secretly helped Massarena to advance in his career as a diplomatist. — Great is her anxiety to return into her convent after midnight, but she declines all escort, and walking alone through the streets, she comes by chance into the house of Count Juliano, a gentleman of somewhat uncertain character, and Massarena's friend. Juliano is just giving a supper to his gay friends and Angela bribes his housekeeper Claudia, to keep her for the night. She appears before the guests disguised as an Arragonian waiting-maid, and charms them all, and particularly Massarena with her grace and coquetry. But as the young gentlemen begin to be insolent, she disappears, feeling herself in danger of being recognized. Massarena, discovering in her the charming black domino, is very unhappy to see her in such company. — Meanwhile Angela succeeds in getting the keys of the convent from Gil-Perez, the porter, who had also left his post, seduced by his love of gormandizing and had come to pay court to Claudia. Angela troubles his conscience and frightens him with her black mask, and flies. When she has

gone, the house-keeper confesses that her pretended Arragonian was a stranger, by all appearance a noble lady, who sought refuge in Juliano's house.

In the third act Angela reaches the convent, but not without having had some more adventures. Through Brigitta's cleverness her absence has not been discovered. At length the day has come when she is to be made Lady-Abbess and she is arrayed in the attire suited to her future high office, when Massarena is announced to her. — He comes to ask to be relieved from a marriage with Ursula, Lord Elfort's daughter, who is destined for him, and who is also an inmate of the convent, but whom he cannot love. Notwithstanding her disguise he recognizes his beloved domino, who, happily for both is released by the Queen from her high mission and permitted to choose a husband. — Of course it is no other, than the happy Massarena; while Ursula is consoled by being made Lady-Abbess, a position which well suits her ambitious temper.

DON CARLOS.

Opera in four acts by Verdi.

Text by Mery and Camilla du Locle.

This opera is one of the first of Verdi's. It was half forgotten, when being suddenly recalled to the stage it met with considerable success. The music is fine and highly dramatic in many parts.

The scene of action lies in Spain. Don Carlos, Crown-prince of Spain comes to the convent of St. Just, where his grand-father, the Emperor Charles the Fifth has just been buried. Carlos bewails

his separation from his step-mother, Elisabeth of Valois, whom he loves with a sinful passion. His friend, the Marquis Posa reminds him of his duty and induces him to leave Spain for Flanders, where an unhappy nation sighs under the cruel rule of King Philip's governors. — Carlos has an interview with the Queen, but beside himself with grief he again declares his love, though having resolved only to ask for her intervention with the King, on behalf of his mission to Flanders. Elisabeth asks him to think of duty and dismisses him. Just then her jealous husband enters, and finding her lady of honor, Countess Aremberg, absent, banishes the latter from Spain. King Philip favors Posa with his particular confidence, though the latter is secretly the friend of Carlos, who is ever at variance with his wicked father. Posa uses his influence with the King for the best of the people, and Philip, putting entire confidence in him, orders him to watch his wife.

The second act represents a fête in the royal gardens at Madrid, where Carlos mistakes the Princess Eboli for the Queen and betrays his unhappy love. The Princess, loving Carlos herself, and having nurtured hopes of her love being responded to, takes vengeance. She possesses herself of a casket in which the Queen keeps Carlos' portrait, a love-token from her maiden-years, and surrenders it to Philip. The King, though conscious of his wife's innocence, is more than ever jealous of his son, and seeks for an occasion to put him out of the way. It is soon found, when Carlos

defies him at an autodafé of heretics. Posa himself is obliged to deprive Carlos of his sword, and the latter is imprisoned. The King has an interview with the Grand-Inquisitor, who demands the death of Don Carlos, asserting him to be a traitor to his country. As Philip demurs, the priest asks Posa's life, as the more dangerous of the two. The King, who never loved a human being except Posa, the pure-hearted Knight, yields to the power of the church.

In the following scene Elisabeth, searching for her casket, is accused of infidelity by her husband. The Princess Eboli, seeing the trouble her mischievous jealousy has brought upon her innocent mistress, penitently confesses her fault and is banished from court. In the last scene of the third act Carlos is visited by Posa, who explains to him, that he has only imprisoned him in order to save him, and that he has announced to the King, that it was himself, Posa, who excited rebellion in Flanders. While they speak, Posa is shot by an arquebusier of the royal guard; Philip enters the cell to present his sword to Carlos, but the son turns from his father with loathing and explains his friend's pious fraud. While Philip bewails the loss of the best man in Spain, loud acclamations are heard from the people, who hearing that their prince is in danger desire to see him.

In the last act the Queen, who promised Posa to watch over Carlos, meets him once more in the convent of St. Just. They are surprised by the King, who approaches, accompanied by the Grand-

Inquisitor, and into his hands the unhappy Carlos is at last delivered.

DON JUAN.

Opera in two acts by **Mozart.**

Text by **Da Ponte.**

Don Juan is Mozart's most beautiful opera; we may even say, that it is the greatest work of this kind. which was ever written by German musician. The text too, written by Mozart's friend, is far above the level of ordinary opera-texts.

The hero, spoilt by fortune and blasé, is ever growing more reckless. He even dares to attack the virtue of Donna Anna, one of the first ladies of a city in Spain, of which her father, an old Spanish Grandee, as noble and as strict in virtue as Don Juan is oversatiated and frivolous, is governor. The old father coming forward to help his beloved daughter, with drawn dagger attacks Don Juan, who compelled do defend himself, has the misfortune to stab his assailant.

Donna Anna, a lady not only noble and virtuous, but proud and high-spirited, vows to avenge her father's death. Though betrothed to a nobleman, named Octavio, she will never know any peace until her father of whose death she feels herself the innocent cause, is avenged. Her only hope is death, and in that she offers the liveliest contrast to her betrothed, who shows himself a gentleman of good temper and qualities, but of a mind too weak for his lady's high-flown courage and truly tragic character. Though Octavio wants to avenge

Donna Anna's father, he would do it only to please her. His one aim is marriage with her. Her passionate feelings he does not understand.

Don Juan, pursued not only by Donna Anna, but also by his own neglected bride, Donna Elvira, tries to forget himself in debauches and extravagances. His servant Leporello, in every manner the real counterpart of his master, is his aider and abettor. A more witty, a more amusing figure does not exist. His fine sarcasm brings Don Juan's character into bold relief; they complement and explain each-other.

But Don Juan, passing from one extravagance to another, sinks deeper; everything he tries begins to fail him, and his doom approaches. — He begins to amuse himself with Zerlina, the young bride of a peasant, named Masetto, but each time, when he seems all but successful in his aim of seducing the little coquette, his enemies, who have united themselves against him, interfere and present a new foe in the person of the bridegroom, the plump and rustic Masetto. At last Don Juan is obliged to take refuge from the hatred of his pursuers. His flight brings him to the grave of the dead governor, in whose memory a life-size statue has been erected in his own park. Excited to the highest pitch and almost beside himself, Don Juan even mocks the dead; he invites him to a supper. The statue moves its head in acceptance of the dreadful invitation of the murderer.

Towards evening Donna Elvira comes to see him, willing to pardon everything, if only her lover

will repent. She fears for him and for his fate, she does not ask for his love, but only for the repentance of his follies, but all is in vain. The half-drunken Don Juan laughs at her, and so she leaves him alone. Then the ghostly guest, the statue of the governor enters. He too tries to move his host's conscience; he fain would save him in the last hour. Don Juan remains deaf to those warnings of a better self, and so he incurs his doom. The statue vanishes, the earth opens and the demons of hell devour Don Juan and his splendid palace.

LES DRAGONS DE VILLARS.

(THE BELL OF THE HERMIT.)

Comic opera in three acts by Louis Aimé Maillart.
Text after the French by G. Ernst.

Maillart, who studied under Halévy in Paris and received the Roman prize (prix de Rome) in the year 1841, composed six operas, all of which are now almost forgotten with the single exception of „Les Dragons de Villars" (in 1856), which found favor in Germany by virtue of its wit and grace.

The music sparkles with French charm and gaity of the most exquisite kind and these are the merits by which this unpretentious opera has kept its place by the side of its grander and more pompous sisters.

The tale is clever and amusing.

The scene is laid in a French mountain-village near the frontier of Savoy towards the close of the war in the Cevennes in 1704.

In the first act peasant women in the service of Thibaut, a rich country Squire, are collecting fruit. Georgette, Thibaut's young wife. oversees their work. In compliance with a general request she treats them to a favorite provençal song, in which a young girl, forgetting her first vows made to a young soldier. gives her hand to another suitor. She is interrupted by the sound of trumpets. Thibaut hurrying up in great distress asks the women to hide themselves at once, because soldiers are marching into the village. He conceals his own wife in the pigeon-house. A detachment of dragoons arrive, and Belamy, their corporal asks for food and wine at Thibaut's house. He learns, that there is nothing to be had and in particular, that all the women have fled, fearing the unprincipled soldiers of King Louis XIV., sent to persecute the poor Huguenots or Camisards, who are hiding in the mountains, — further that the „Dragons de Villars" are said to be an especially wild and dissolute set.

Belamy is greatly disgusted and after having had his dinner and a sleep in Thibaut's own bed, decides to march on. The Squire gladly offers to accompany the soldiers to St. Gratien's grotto near the hermitage, where they have orders to search for the Huguenot refugees.

While Belamy is sleeping, Thibaut calls his servant Silvain and scolds him, because though his best servant, he has now repeatedly been absent over-long on his errands; finally orders him to saddle the mules.

Stammering Silvain owns, that they have gone

astray in the mountains, but that he is sure of their being found in due time. While Thibaut expresses his fear that they may be stolen by the fugitives, Rose Friquet, an orphan-girl, brings the mules, riding on the back of one of them. Thibaut loads her with reproaches, but Silvain thanks her warmly, and though she mockingly repudiates his thanks, he discovers that she has taken the mules in order not to let the provost into Silvain's secret. The fact is that Silvain carries food every day to the refugees, and Rose Friquet, the poor goat-keeper, who is despised and supposed to be wicked and malicious, protects him in her poor way, because he once intercepted a stone, which was meant for her head.

While the soldiers are dining, Belamy, who has found Georgette's bonnet, demands an explanation.

Thibaut, confused, finds a pretext for going out, but Rose betrays to Belamy first the wine-cellar and then Georgette's hiding-place. The young wife cries for help and Rose runs in to fetch Thibaut. Belamy is delighted with the pretty Georgette, but she tells him rather anxiously, that all the wives of the village must needs remain entirely true to their husbands, for the hermit of St. Gratien, though dead for two hundred years, is keeping rigid watch, and betrays every case of infidelity by ringing a little bell, which is heard far and wide.

Belamy is somewhat desirous to try the experiment with Georgette and asks her to accompany him to the hermitage instead of her husband.

After having found the other women in the village, the soldiers, to Thibaut's great vexation, decide to stay and amuse themselves. Silvain rejoices and after a secret sign from Rose resolves to warn the refugees in the evening.

In the second act Rose and Silvain meet near St. Gratien. Rose, after telling him that all the paths are occupied by sentries, promises to show him a way for the refugees, which she and her goat alone know. Silvain, thanking her warmly, endeavours to induce her to care more for her outward appearance, praising her pretty features. Rose is delighted to hear for the first time that she is pretty, and the duet ensuing is one of the most charming things in the opera. Silvain promises to be her friend henceforth and then leaves, in order to seek the Camisards. After this Thibaut appears, seeking his wife, whom he has seen going away with Belamy. Finding Rose he imagines he has mistaken her for his wife, but she laughingly corrects him and he proceeds to search for Georgette. Belamy now comes and courts Thibaut's wife. But Rose, seeing them, resolves to free the path for the others. — No sooner has Belamy tried to snatch a kiss from his companion, than Rose draws the rope of the hermit's bell, and she repeats the proceeding, until Georgette takes flight, while Thibaut rushes up at the sound of the bell. Belamy reassures him, intimating that the bell may have rung for Rose (though it never rings for girls) and accompanies him to the village. But he soon returns to look for the supposed hermit, who has

played him this trick and finds Rose instead, who does not perceive him. — To his great surprise Silvain comes up with the whole troop of refugees, leading the aged clergyman, who had been a father to him in his childhood. Silvain presents Rose to them as their deliverer and vows to make her his wife. — Rose leads them to the secret path, while Silvain returns to the village, leaving Belamy triumphant at his discovery.

In the third act we find the people on the following morning speaking of nothing but Silvain's wedding with Rose and of the hermit's bell. Nobody knows who has been the culprit, but Thibaut slily calculates that the hermit has rung beforehand, when Rose the bride kissed the dragoon. Having learned that the soldiers had been commanded to saddle their horses in the midst of the dancing the night before, and that Belamy, sure of his prey, has come back, he believes that Rose has betrayed the poor Camisards in order to win the price set on their heads and this opinion he now communicates to Silvain.

To keep Belamy away from Georgette, the sly Squire has conducted him to the wine-cellar, and the officer, now half-drunk admits having had a rendez-vous with Rose. — When Thibaut has retired, Belamy again kisses Georgette, and lo, the bell does not ring this time!

Meanwhile Rose comes down the hill, neatly clad and glowing with joy and pride and Georgette disregarding Thibaut's reproofs offers her the wedding-garland. The whole village is assembled to

see the wedding, but Silvain appears with dark brow and when Rose radiantly greets him, he pushes her back fiercely, believing that she betrayed the refugees, who are, as he has heard, caught. Rose is too proud to defend herself, but when Georgette tries to console her, she silently draws from her bosom a paper, containing the information that the refugees have safely crossed the frontier. — Great is Silvain's shame and heartfelt his repentance. — Suddenly Belamy enters, beside himself with rage, for his prey has escaped and he has lost his patent as lieutenant together with the remuneration of 200 pistoles, and he at once orders Silvain to be shot. But Rose bravely defends her lover, threatening to reveal the dragoons' neglect of duty. When therefore Belamy's superior appears to hear the important news of which the messenger told him, his corporal is only able to stammer out that nothing in particular has happened, and so after all, Georgette is saved from discovery and Rose becomes Silvain's happy bride.

August 15/90
Vienna.

THE DUSK OF THE GODS.

Third day of the Nibelungen Ring by Wagner.

This is the end of the great and beautiful tragedy and really it may be called both a sublime and grand conclusion, which unites once again all the dramatic and musical elements of the whole and presents to us a picture the more interesting and touching, as it is now purely human. The Gods who, though filled with passions and faults

like mortals, never can be for us living persons, fall into the background, and human beings, full of high aspirations, take their places. The long and terrible conflict between the power of gold and that of love is at last fought out and love conquers.

In the Dusk of the Gods we see again the curse, which lies on gold, and the sacred benediction of true love. Can there be anything more noble, more touching, than Brünnhilde's mourning for Siegfried and the grand sacrifice of herself in expiation of her error?

The third day opens with a prelude, in which we see three Norns, weaving world's fate. When the cord breaks, they fly; the dawn of another world is upon them.

In the first act Siegfried bids Brünnhilde farewell. His active soul thirsts for deeds, and Brünnhilde having taught him all she knows does not detain him. He gives her the fatal ring in token of remembrance, confiding her to the care of Loge. Then we are transported to the Gibichung's hall on the Rhine. Gunther and his sister Gutrune sit there, together with their gloomy half-brother Hagen. The latter advises his brother to marry, telling him of the beautiful woman, guarded by the flames. When he has sufficiently excited Gunther's longing, he suggests that, as Siegfried is the only one, able to gain Brünnhilde, Gunther should attach him to his person by giving him Gutrune as wife. This is to be achieved by a draught, which has the power of causing oblivion. Who ever drinks it forgets that ever a woman has existed

beside the one, who has tended the potion. Hagen well knows of Siegfried's union with Brünnhilde, but Gunther and Gutrune are both ignorant of it.

Siegfried arrives and is heartily welcomed. All turns out as Hagen has foretold. By the fatal potion Siegfried falls passionately in love with Gutrune, so that he completely forgets Brünnhilde. He swears blood-brothership to Gunther, and promises to win Brünnhilde for him. Then the two depart on their errand.

Meanwhile the Walkyrie Waltraute comes to Brünnhilde and beseeches her to render Siegfried's ring to the Rhine-daughters, in order to save the Gods from destruction. Brünnhilde refuses to part with the token of her husband's love, and hardly has Waltraute departed, than fate overtakes her in the person of Siegfried, who ventures through the flames in Gunther's shape. She vainly struggles against him, he snatches the ring from her, and so she is conquered. Siegfried holds vigil through the night, his sword separating him and the woman he wooed, and in the early dawn he leads her away to her bridegroom, who takes Siegfried's place unawares.

In the second act Alberich appears to Hagen. He tells his son of the story of the ring and bids him kill Siegfried and recover the stolen treasure for its owner. — Siegfried appears announcing Gunther's and Brünnhilde's arrival. The bridal pair is received by all their men, but the joy is soon damped by Brünnhilde recognizing in the bridegroom of Gutrune her own husband. Siegfried

does not know her, but she discovers her ring on his hand, and asserting that Gunther won it from her, this hero is obliged to acknowledge shameful role he played. — Though Siegfried swears that his sword Nothung guarded him from any contact with Gunther's bride, Brünnhilde responds in a most startling manner, and both swear on Hagen's spear that it may pierce them, should their words prove false. All this makes a dreadful impression on the weak mind of Gunther.

When Siegfried has withdrawn in high spirits with his bride Gutrune, Hagen hoping to gain the ring offers to avenge Brünnhilde on the faithless Siegfried. Brünnhilde in her deadly wrath betrays to him the only vulnerable spot beneath Siegfried's shoulder. Gunther consents reluctantly to their schemes.

The third act opens with a scene on the Rhine. The Rhine-daughters try to persuade Siegfried to render them the ring. He is about to throw it into the water, when they warn him of the evil which will befal him, should he refuse their request. This awakens his pride, and laughing he turns from them, he, the fearless hero. His fellow-hunters overtake him, and while he relates to them the story of his life, Hagen mixes a herb with his wine, which enables him to remember all he has forgotten. Hagen then treacherously drives his spear into Siegfried's back, killing him. He dies with Brünnhilde's praise on his lips. The funeral-march which here follows is one of the most beautiful ever written. When the dead hero is

brought to the Giebichung's hall, Gutrune bewails him loudly. A dispute arises between Hagen and Gunther about the ring, which ends by Hagen slaying Gunther. But lo, when Hagen tries to strip the ring off the dead hand, the fingers close themselves, and the hand raises itself, bearing testimony against the murderer. Brünnhilde appears, to mourn for the dead; she drives away Gutrune, who sees too late that under the influence of the fatal draught, Siegfried forgot his lawful wife, whom she now recognizes in Brünnhilde. The latter, taking a long farewell of her dead husband, orders a funeral pile to be erected. As soon as Siegfried's body is placed on it, she lights it with a firebrand, and when it is in full blaze, she mounts her faithful steed, leaping with it into the flames.

When the fire sinks, the Rhine-daughters are seen to snatch the ring, which is now purified from its curse by Brünnhilde's death.

Hagen, trying to wrench it from them, is drawn into the waves and so dies.

A dusky light, like that of a new dawn spreads over heaven, and through a mist, Walhalla, with all the Gods sleeping peacefully, may be perceived.

EURYANTHE.

Grand romantic opera by C. M. von Weber.

Text by Helmina von Chezy.

This opera has not had the success of Oberon or Freischütz, a fact to be attributed to the weakness of its libretto, and not to its music, which is so

grand and noble, that it cannot but fill the hearer with admiration and pleasure.

The overture is one of the finest pieces ever written, and the choruses and solos are equally worthy of admiration.

The plot is as follows:

Adolar, Count of Nevers and Rethel is betrothed to Euryanthe of Savoy, and the wedding is to take place, when one day, in the King's presence Lysiart, Count of Forest and Beaujolais suggests, that all women are accessible to seduction. He provokes Adolar so much, that he succeeds in making him stake his lands and everything he possesses on his bride's fidelity. Lysiart on the other hand promises to bring a token of Euryanthe's favor.

In the following scene we find Euryanthe in the company of Eglantine de Puiset. This lady is a prisoner, who has taken refuge in the castle of Nevers, and has ingratiated herself so much with Euryanthe, that the latter tenderly befriends the false woman. Asking Euryanthe, why she always chooses for her recreation the dreary spot of the park, where Adolar's sister Emma lies buried, she is told by her in confidence, that she prays for Emma, who poisoned herself after her lover's death in battle. Her soul could find no rest, until the ring, which contained the venom should be wet with the tears of a faithful and innocent maid, shed in her extreme need. No sooner has Euryanthe betrayed her bridegroom's secret that she repents doing so, foreboding ill to come. Lysiart enters to escort her to the marriage festival, but he vainly

tries to ensnare her innocence, when Eglantine comes to his rescue. She loves Adolar, and her passion not being returned, she has sworn vengeance. Stealing the fatal ring from the sepulchre, she gives it to Lysiart as a token of Euryanthe's faithlessness, and Lysiart, after having brought Euryanthe to Adolar, shows the ring in presence of the whole court, pretending to have received it from Euryanthe. The poor maiden denies it, but as Lysiart reveals the secret of the grave, she cannot deny that she has broken her promise of never telling the secret.

Adolar full of despair surrenders everything to his rival, leading Euryanthe, whom he believes to be false, into the wilderness to kill her. A serpent is about to sting him, when his bride throws herself between. He kills the reptile, but after her sacrifice he is unable to raise his arm against her and so leaves her to her fate.

She is found by the King and his hunters, and to them she relates the whole story of her error of confiding in the false Eglantine. The King promises to inform Adolar and takes her back with him. Meanwhile Adolar returning once more to his grounds, is seen by his people. One of them, Bertha, tells him that Euryanthe is innocent, and that Eglantine, who is about to marry Lysiart and to reign as supreme mistress over the country, has been the culprit.

Eglantine, appearing in bridal attire, led by Lysiart, suddenly becomes a prey to fearful remorse, she sees Emma's ghost, and in her anxiety reveals the whole plot. Her bridegroom stabs her in his

fury, but is at once seized by order of the King who just then comes upon the scene. Adolar, believing Euryanthe dead, demands a meeting with Lysiart. But the King declares, that the murderer must incur the penalty of the laws. He renders up to Adolar his possessions and his bride, who the more easily pardons her repentant bridegroom, that she has saved his sister's soul by the innocent tears of her misfortune.

FIDELIO.

Opera in two acts by L. van Beethoven.

This opera, the only one by the greatest of German composers, is also one of the most exquisite we possess. The music is so grand and sublime, so passionate and deep, that it enters into the heart of the hearer. The libretto is also full of the highest and most beautiful feeling.

Florestan, a Spanish nobleman, has dared to blame Don Pizarro, the governor of the state-prison, a man as cruel as he is powerful. Pizarro has thus become Florestan's deadly foe, he has seized him secretly and thrown him into a dreadful dungeon, reporting his death to the minister.

But this poor prisoner has a wife, Leonore, who is as courageous as she is faithful. She never believes in the false reports, but disguising herself in male attire, resolves not to rest until she has found her husband.

In this disguise we find her in the first act; she has contrived to get entrance into the fortress

where she supposes her husband imprisoned, and by her gentle and courteous behaviour, and readiness for service of all kinds has won not only the heart of Rocco, the jailer, but that of his daughter Marcelline, who falls in love with the gentle youth and neglects her former lover Jaquino. Fidelio persuades Rocco to let her help him in his office with the prisoners. Quivering with mingled hope and fear she opens the prison gates, to let the state-prisoners out into the court, where they may for once have air and sunshine.

But seek as she may, she cannot find her husband and in silent despair she deems herself baffled.

Meanwhile Pizarro has received a letter from Sevilla, announcing the minister's forthcoming visit to the fortress. Pizarro, frightened at the consequences of such a call, resolves to silence Florestan for ever. He orders the jailer to kill him, but the old man will not burden his soul with a murder and refuses firmly. Then Pizarro determines to kill Florestan himself, and summons Rocco to dig a grave in the dungeon, in order to hide all traces of the crime.

Rocco, already looking upon the gentle and diligent Fidelio as his future son-in-law, confides to him his dreadful secret, and with fearful forebodings she entreats him to accept her help in the heavy work. Pizarro gives his permission, Rocco being too old and feeble to do the work quickly enough if alone, Pizarro has been rendered furious by the indulgence granted to the prisoners at Fidelio's

entreaty, but a feeling of triumph overcomes every other, when he sees Rocco depart for the dungeon with his assistant.

Here we find poor Florestan chained to a stone; he is wasted to a skeleton, as his food has been reduced in quantity week by week by the cruel orders of his tormentor. He is gradually losing his reason; he has visions and in each one beholds his beloved wife.

When Leonore recognizes him, she well-nigh faints, but with a supernatural effort of strength she rallies, and begins her work. She has a piece of bread with her, which she gives to the prisoner and with it the remainder of Rocco's wine. Rocco, mild at heart, pities his victim sincerely, but he dares not act against the orders of his superior, fearing to lose his position, or even his life.

While Leonore refreshes the sick man, Rocco gives a sign to Pizarro that the work is done, and bids Fidelio leave; but she only hides herself behind a stone-pillar, waiting with deadly fear for the coming event and decided to save her husband or to die with him.

Pizarro enters, secretly resolved to kill not only his foe, but also both witnesses of his crime. He will not kill Florestan however without letting him know, who his assailant is. So he loudly shouts his own much-feared name, but while he raises his dagger, Leonore throws herself between him and Florestan, shielding the latter with her breast. Pizarro, stupefied like Florestan, loses his presence of mind. Leonore profits by it and presents a

pistol at him, with which she threatens his life, should he attempt another attack. At this critical moment the trumpets sound, announcing the arrival of the Minister, and Pizarro, in impotent wrath is compelled to retreat. They are all summoned before the Minister, who is shocked at seeing his old friend Florestan in this sad state, but not the less delighted with and full of reverence for the noble courage of Leonore.

Pizarro is conducted away in chains, and the faithful wife with her own hands removes the fetters, which still bind the husband for whom she has just won freedom and happiness.

Marcelline, feeling inclined to be ashamed of her mistake, returns to her simple and faithful lover Jaquino.

LA FIGLIA DEL REGGIMENTO.

Comic opera in two acts by Gaëtano Donizetti.

Text by St. George and Bayard.

This opera is one of the few of Donizetti's numerous works, which still retain their attraction for the theatre-visitor, the others are his Lucrezia Borgia and Lucia di Lammermoor.

The „Daughter of the regiment" happily combines Italian richness of melody with French „esprit" and French sallies, and hence the continued charm of this almost international music.

The libretto can be accounted good.

The scene in the first act is laid near Bologna in the year 1815, the second act in the castle of the Marchesa di Maggiorivoglio.

Mary, a vivandière, has been found and educated by a French sergeant, named Sulpice, and therefore belongs in a sense to his regiment, which is on a campaign in Italy. She is called the „daughter" of the regiment, which has adopted her, and she has grown up, a bright and merry girl, full of pluck and spirit, the pet and delight of the whole regiment.

Tonio, a young Swiss, who has fallen in love with Mary, is believed by the grenadiers to be a spy, and is about to be hanged. But Mary, knowing that he has only come to see her, tells them that he lately saved her life, when she was in danger of falling over a precipice. This changes everything and on his expressing a desire to become one of them, the grenadiers suffer the Swiss to enlist into their company. After the soldiers depart he confesses his love to Mary, who returns it heartily. The soldiers agree to give their consent, when the Marchesa di Maggiorivoglio appears, and by a letter once affixed to the foundling Mary, addressed to a Marchesa of the same name and carefully kept by Sulpice, it is proved that Mary is the Marchesa's niece. Of course this noble lady refuses her consent to a marriage with the low-born Swiss and claims Mary from her guardian. With tears and laments Mary takes leave of her regiment and her lover, who at once decides to follow her. But he has enlisted as soldier and is forbidden to leave the ranks. Sulpice and his whole regiment curse the Marchesa, who thus carries away their joy.

In the second act Mary is in her aunt's castle.

She has masters of every kind for her education in order to become a lady comme il faut, but she cannot forget her freedom, and her dear soldiers, and instead of singing solfeggios and cavatinas, she is caught warbling her „Rataplan“, to the Marchesa's grief and sorrow. Nor can she cease to think of Tonio, and only after a great struggle has she been induced to promise her hand to a nobleman, when she suddenly hears the well-beloved sound of drums and trumpets. It is her own regiment with Tonio as their leader, for he has been made an officer on account of his courage and brave behaviour. Hoping that his altered position may turn the Marchesa's heart in his favor, he again asks for Mary, but his suit is once more rejected. Then he proposes flight, but the Marchesa, detecting his plan, reveals to Mary that she is not her niece, but her own daughter, born in early wedlock with an officer far beneath her in rank, who soon after died in battle. This fact she has concealed from her family, but as it is now evident that she has closer ties with Mary, the poor girl dares not disobey her, and, though broken-hearted, consents to renounce Tonio.

The Marchesa invites a large company of guests to celebrate her daughter's betrothal to the son of a neighboring duchess. But Mary's faithful grenadiers suddenly appear to rescue her from those hateful ties, and astonish the whole company by their recital of Mary's early history. The obedient maiden however, submissive to her fate, is about to sign the marriage contract, when at last the

Marchesa, touched by her obedience and her sufferings, conquers her own pride and consents to the union of her daughter with Tonio. Sulpice and his soldiers burst out into loud shouts of approbation, and the highborn guests retire silently and disgusted.

August 21-'90
Vienna.

DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER.

(THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.)

Romantic opera in three acts by Wagner.

This fine opera is Wagner's second work, which he composed in direst need, when living at Paris with his young wife. The songs, which so well imitate the hurricane and the howling of the ocean, he himself heard during an awful storm at sea. The whole opera is exceedingly characteristic and impressive. Wagner arranged the libretto himself, as he did for all his operas which succeeded this one. He found the substance of it in an old legend, which dates from the 16th century. The flying Dutchman is a sort of wandering Jew, condemned to sail forever on the seas, until he has found a woman, whose love to him is faithful unto death.

In the first act we find ourselves on the high seas. Daland, a Norwegian skipper, has met with several misfortunes on his way home, and is compelled to anchor on a deserted shore. There he finds the flying Dutchman, who vainly roves from sea to sea to find death and with it peace. His only hope is dooms-day. He has never found a maiden faithful to him, and he knows not how

often and how long he has vainly tried to be released from his doom. Once, every seven years, he is allowed to go on shore, and take a wife. This time has now come again, and hearing from Daland, that he has a daughter, sweet and pure, he begins to hope once more, and offers all his wealth to the father for a shelter under the Norwegian's roof and for the hand of his daughter Senta. — Daland is only too glad to accept for his child, what to him seems an immense fortune and so they sail home together.

In the second act we find Senta in the spinning-room. The servants of the house are together spinning and singing. Senta is amongst them, but her wheel does not turn, she is dreamily regarding an old picture. It is that of the flying Dutchman, whose legend so deeply touches her, that she has grown to love its hero, without having in reality seen him.

Senta has a wooer already in the person of Erick the hunter, but she does not care much for him. With deep feeling she sings to the spinning maidens the ballad of the doomed man, as she has heard it from Mary, her nurse:

An old captain wanted to sail round the Cape of Good Hope, and as the wind was against him, he swore a terrible oath, that he never would leave off trying. The devil heard him and doomed him to sail on to eternity, but God's angel had pity on him and showed him, how he could find deliverance through a wife, faithful unto the grave.

All the maidens pray to God, to let the maiden be found at last, when Senta ecstatically exclaims:

„I will be his wife!“ At this moment her father's ship is announced. Senta is about to run away to welcome him, but is detained by Erick, who tries to win her for himself. She answers evasively; then Daland enters and with him a dark and gloomy stranger. Senta stands spell-bound: she recognizes the hero of her picture. The Dutchman is not less impressed, seeing in her the angel of his dreams and as it were his deliverer, and so, meeting by the guidance of a superior power, they seem created for each other and Senta, accepting the offer of his hand, swears to him eternal fidelity.

In the third act we see the flying Dutchman's ship; everybody recognizes it by its black mast and its blood-red sail. The Norwegian sailors call loudly to the marines of the strange ship, but nothing stirs, everthing seems dead and haunted. At last the unearthly inhabitants of the Dutch ship awake; they are old and gray and wrinkled, all doomed to the fate of their captain. They begin a wild and gloomy song, which sends a chill into the hearts of the stout Norwegians.

Meanwhile Erick, beholding in Senta the betrothed of the Dutchman, is in despair. Imploring her to turn back, he calls up old memories and at last charges her with infidelity to him.

As soon as the Dutchman hears this accusation, he turns from Senta, feeling that he is again lost. But Senta will not break her faith. Seeing the Dutchman fly from her, ready to sail away, she swiftly runs after him and throws herself from the cliff into the waves.

By this sacrifice the spell is broken, the ghostly ship sinks for ever into the ocean, and an angel bears the poor wanderer to eternal rest, where he is re-united to the bride, who has proved faithful unto death.

THE FOLKUNGS.

Grand opera in five acts by Edmund Kretschmer.
Text by Mosenthal.

The composer of this opera evidently belongs to the most talented of our days, and it is no wonder that his two operas „Henry the Lion" and „the Folkungs", have rapidly found their way to every stage of importance. Particularly the „Folkungs" is such a happy combination of modern orchestration, abundance of fine melody, and northern characteristical coloring, that it charms the connoisseur as well as the unlearned.

The scene is laid in Sweden, in the 13th century.

The first act represents the convent Nydal on the snowy heights of the Kyöles. Sten Patrik, the confidant and abettor of Bengt, Duke of Schoonen, has allured Prince Magnus, second son of King Erick of Sweden, to follow him out of his convent, and has brought him hither by ruse and force. He now announces to the Prince, that he may choose between death and a nameless live in the convent Nydal, and Magnus, having no choice, swears on Sten's sword that he, Prince Magnus, will be forever dead to the world.

The monks receive him into their brotherhood, as he answers to the Abbot Ansgar's questions, that he is an orphan, homeless, abandoned, seeking

peace only. The Abbot first subjects Magnus to a trial of his constancy, by letting him hold the night-vigil in storm and snow. — The monks retire, leaving the unhappy Prince outside the gates. While he sinks into deep reverie, Lars Olafson, the castellan of the King's castle of Bognäs, and son of the Prince's nurse, appears. He seeks his Prince, who so mysteriously disappeared from the world, and relates to Magnus, that King Erick is dead, as well as his eldest son, and that Prince Magnus is called to come and claim his throne and bride. Princess Maria, the only surviving Folkung, is already being wooed by their enemy, Duke Bengt of Schoonen, and now the listener understands the vile plot against himself. And as Lars calls him to defend his country and his Princess against the Duke and his confederates the Danes, Magnus considers it a sign from heaven that he is to die for his country, a course of action, which his oath does not prohibit.

When the Abbot calls his new guest, he has disappeared, and Sten Patrik consoles himself with the thought that the fugitive must have perished in the raging snow-storm.

The second act shows us Princess Maria in her castle Bognäs on the lake of Mälar. She is the King's niece and successor to the throne. She takes a last farewell from her people, and Bengt appears to lead her to Upsala for the coronation.

The nurse Karin and her son Olaf assure her of her folk's fidelity, and when she has departed, Lars calls the men together, and presenting the youth from Skölen as their leader, makes them take

oath of faith on their standard. — Karin recognizes the Prince in the stranger. but he firmly denies his identity, and with glowing words calls the people to rise against their common foe.

The next scene begins with the act of coronation.— The crowned Queen Maria is to announce her choice of a husband from the Mora-stone, when her words are arrested by a look from Magnus, in whom she recognizes the youth she loved.

But, though almost mad with longing and torment, Magnus, mindful of his oath, still denies himself, and the Duke with his friend Sten, who both believed themselves lost, impetuously demand the impostor's arrest. But the Queen asserts her right to judge him herself.

In the fourth act Magnus is brought to his mother's sleeping room. The charm of youthful remembrances surround him. and hearing an old ballad, which Karin sings, he forgets himself and so proves his identity beyond any doubt to the hidden listeners. Maria rushes forward; he folds her to his breast in a transport of love, and only when Karin greets him as her King, he remembers that he has broken his oath, and without more reflection precipitates himself from the balcony into the sea. Maria sinks back in a swoon.

In the last act Sten Patrik comes, to remind Bengt of his promise, to give him Schoonen. The Duke refuses to pay him, now that Sweden is in revolt and the Prince living. Sten threatens to reveal his treachery against Magnus. Bengt is about to kill the only accomplice in his deed, when

Maria, who has heard all, arrests his arm, and accuses him of murder. Then she rushes to the balcony to call her people to vengeance. Bengt draws his sword to stab her, but the people throng in, seize and throw him into the sea. Now Maria hears with rapture that Magnus lives and has driven away the Danes. With him enter the monks, whose Abbot releases the Prince from his oath. Maria lovingly embracing him, places her crown on her bridegroom's head and all cry hail! to their King Magnus Ericson.

FRA DIAVOLO

Comic opera in three acts by Auber.
Text by Scribe.

This nice little opera, though not equal in beauty and perfection to the „Muette de Portici" by the same author, is, notwithstanding, a happy invention of Auber's, particularly because the local tints are so well caught. The banditti are painted with bright and glowing colors, and the part of the heroine, Zerline is the most grateful ever written for a soubrette. The text by Scribe abounds in happy sallies and lively details. It is laid at Terracina in Italy. Fra Diavolo is a celebrated and much feared chief of brigands. The Roman court of justice has set a price of 10.000 piastres on his head. In the first act we meet with the Roman soldiers, who undertake to win the money. Their captain Lorenzo has a double aim in trying to catch the brigand. He is Zerline's lover, but having no money, Zerline's father Matteo, the owner

of a hotel, threatens to give her to a rich farmer's son. Meanwhile Fra Diavolo has forced his society on a rich English lord, Cookburn by name, who is on his wedding-tour with his fair young wife Pamella. Lord Cookburn looks jealously at Fra Diavolo, though he does not recognize in him a brigand. The English are robbed by Diavolo's band. Disgusted with the insecurity of „la bella Italia" they reach the inn at Terracina, where the dragoons, hearing the account of this new robbery, believe that it was Fra Diavolo with his band, and at once decide to pursue him.

Shortly afterwards Fra Diavolo arrives at the inn, disguised as the Marquis of San Marco, under which name the English lord has already made his acquaintance. He is not enchanted by the arrival of this Marquis; he fears a new flirtation with his own fair wife. Pamella wears most valuable diamonds, and these strike the eye of Fra Diavolo.

He sees that the English have been clever enough to conceal the greater part of their wealth and resolves to put himself speedily into possession of it.

He is flirting desperately with Pamella and looking tenderly at the pretty Zerline, when the soldiers return, having captured twenty of the brigands and retaken the greater part of Lord Cookburn's money and jewels. Lorenzo, the captain of dragoons is rewarded by the magnanimous Lord with 10.000 lire, and may now hope to win Zerline's hand. But Fra Diavolo vows to avenge the death of his comrades on Lorenzo.

In the second act he conceals himself behind the curtains in Zerline's sleeping-room, and during the night he admits his two companions Beppo and Giacomo. Zerline enters and is about to retire to rest, after praying to the Holy Virgin for protection. — During her sleep Giacomo is to stab her, while the two others are to rob the English Milord.

But Zerline's prayer, and her innocence touch even the robbers, the deed is delayed, and this delay brings Lorenzo upon them. Fra Diavolo's two companions hide themselves, and the false Marquis alone is found in Zerline's room. He assures Lorenzo, that he had a rendez-vous with his bride, and at the same time whispers into Milord's ear, that he came by appointment with Milady, showing her portrait, of which he had robbed her the day before, as proof. The consequence of these lies is a challenge from Lorenzo, and a meeting with Diavolo is fixed. The latter is full of triumphant glee; he has arranged a deep-laid plan with the surviving members of his band and hopes to ensnare not only Lorenzo but his whole company. Ordinarily Diavolo is a noble brigand; he never troubles women, and he loads poor people with gifts, taking the gold out of rich men's purses only, but now he is full of ire and his one thought is of vengeance.

Finally he is betrayed by the carelessness of his own helpmates. Beppo and Giacomo, seeing Zerline, recognize in her their fair prey of the evening before and betray themselves by repeating some of the words which she had given utterance to. Zerline, hearing them, is now able to comprehend

the wicked plot, which was woven to destroy her happiness. The two banditti are captured and compelled to lure their captain into a trap. Diavolo appears, not in his disguise as a Marquis, but in his own well-known dress, with the red plume waving from his bonnet, and being assured by Beppo, that all is secure, is easily captured. Now all the false imputations are cleared up. Milord is reconciled to his wife and Lorenzo obtains the hand of the lovely Zerline.

DER FREISCHÜTZ.

Romantic opera in three acts by C. M. von Weber.
Text by Friedrich Kind.

This charming opera done at Dresden 1820, is the most favored of Weber's compositions. It is truly German, being both fantastic and poetic. The libretto is an old German legend and runs thus:

A young huntsman, Max, is in love with Agathe, daughter of Cuno, the chief-ranger of Prince Ottocar of Bohemia. Max woos her, but their union depends on a master-shot, which he is to deliver on the following morning.

During a village-festival he has all day been unlucky in shooting, and we see him full of anger and sorrow, being mocked at by peasants, more lucky than he.

His comrade, Caspar, one of the ranger's older huntsmen is his evil genius. He has sold himself to the devil, is a gloomy, mysterious fellow, and hopes to save his soul by delivering some

other victim to the demon. He wants to tempt Max to try enchanted bullets, to be obtained at the cross-road during the midnight-hour, by drawing a magic circle with a bloody sword and invoking the name of the mysterious huntsman. Father Cuno, hearing him, drives him away, begging Max to think of his bride and to pray to God for success.

But Max cannot forget the railleries of the peasants; he broods over his misfortunes and when he is well-nigh despairing, Caspar, who meanwhile calls Samiel (the devil in person) to help, encourages him to take refuge in stimulants. He tries to intoxicate the unhappy lover, by pouring drops from a phial into his wine. When Max has grown more and more excited, Caspar begins to tell him of nature's secret powers, which might help him. Max first struggles against the evil influence, but when Caspar, handing him his gun, lets him shoot an eagle, soaring high in the air, his huntman's heart is elated and he wishes to become possessed of such bullet. Caspar tells him that they are enchanted and persuades him to a meeting in the Wolf's-glen at midnight, where the bullets may be moulded.

In the second act Agathe is with her cousin Aennchen. Agathe is the true German maiden, serious, and thoughtful almost to melancholy. She presents a marked contrast to her gay and lighthearted cousin, who tries to brighten Agathe with fun and frolic. They adorn themselves with roses, which Agathe received from a holy hermit, who

blessed her, but warned her of impending evil. So Agathe is full of dread forebodings, and after Aennchen's departure she fervently prays to Heaven for her beloved. When she sees him come to her through the forest with flowers on his hat, her fears vanish, and she greets him joyously. But Max only answers hurriedly, that having killed a stag in the Wolf's-glen, he is obliged to return there. Agathe, filled with terror at the mention of this illfamed name wants to keep him back, but ere she can detain him, he has fled. With hurried steps Max approaches the Wolf's-glen, where Caspar is already occupied in forming circles of black stones, in the midst of which he places a skull, an eagle's wing, a crucible and a bullet-mould. Caspar then calls on Samiel, invoking him to allow him a few more years on earth. To-morrow is the day appointed for Satan to take his soul, but Caspar promises to surrender Max in exchange. Samiel, who appears through the cleft of a rock, agrees to let him have six of the fatal balls, reserving only the seventh for himself.

Caspar then proceeds to make the bullets, Max only looking on, stunned and remorseful at what he sees. His mother's spirit appears to him, but he is already under the influence of the charm, he cannot move. The proceeding goes forward amid hellish noise. A hurricane arises, flames and devilish forms flicker about, wild and horrible creatures rush by and others follow in hot pursuit. The noise grows worse, the earth seems to quake, until at length after Caspar's reiterated invocations

Samiel shows himself at the word, „seven". Max and Caspar both make the sign of the cross, and fall on their knees more dead than alive.

In the third act we find Agathe, waiting for her bridesmaids. She is perturbed and sad, having had frightful dreams, and not knowing what has become of Max. Aennchen consoles her, diverting her with a merry song, until the bridesmaids enter, bringing flowers and gifts. They then prepare to crown her with the bridal wreath, when lo, instead of the myrtle, there lies in the box a wreath of white roses, the ornament of the dead.

Meanwhile everybody is assembled on the lawn near Prince Ottocar's tent, to be present at the firing of the master-shot. The Prince points out to Max a white dove as an object at which to aim. At this critical moment Agathe appears, crying out: „Don't shoot Max, I am the white dove!" But it is too late; Max has fired, and Agathe sinks down at the same time as Caspar, who has been waiting behind a tree and who now falls heavily to the ground, while the dove flies away unhurt. Everybody believes that Max has shot his bride, but she is only in a swoon; the bullet has really killed the villain Caspar. It was the seventh, the direction of which Samiel reserved for himself, and Satan having no power over the pious maiden, directed it on Caspar, already forfeited to him. Max confesses his sin with deep remorse. The Prince scornfully bids him leave his dominions for ever. But Agathe prays for him, and at last the Prince follows the hermit's advice, giving the unhappy

youth a year of probation, during which to prove his repentance, and grow worthy of his virtuous bride.

GENOVEVA.

Opera in four acts by Robert Schumann.
Text after Hebbel and Tieck.

The music of this opera is surpassingly delightful. Though Schumann's genius was not that of a dramatist of a very high order, this opera deserves to be known and esteemed universally. Nowhere can melodies be found finer or more poetical and touching than in this noble musical composition, the libretto of which may also be called interesting though it is faulty in its want of action.

It is the old legend of Genoveva somewhat altered. Siegfried, Count of the Palatinate, is ordered by the Emperor Charles Martell to join him in the war with the infidels, who broke out of Spain under Abdurrhaman. The noble Count recommends his wife Genoveva and all he possesses, to the protection of his friend Golo, who is however secretly in love with his master's wife. After Siegfried has said farewell she falls into a swoon, which Golo takes advantage of to kiss her, thereby still further exciting his flaming passion. Genoveva finally awakes and goes away to mourn in silence for her husband.

Golo being alone, an old hag Margaretha, whom he takes for his nurse, comes to console him. She is in reality his mother and has great schemes for her son's future happiness. She in-

sinuates to him that Genoveva, being alone, needs consolation and will easily be led on to accept more tender attentions, and she promises him her assistance. The second acts shows Genoveva's room. She longs sadly for her husband and sees with pain and disgust the insolent behaviour of the servants, whose wild songs penetrate into her silent chamber.

Golo enters to bring her the news of a great victory over Abdurrhaman, news, which fills her heart with joy.

She bids Golo sing and sweetly accompanies his song, which so fires his passion that he falls upon his knees and frightens her by glowing words. Vainly she bids him leave her; he only grows more excited, till she repulses him with the word „bastard". Now his love turns into hatred, and when Drago, the faithful steward comes to announce that the servants begin to be more and more insolent, daring even to insult the good name of the Countess, Golo asserts that they speak the truth about her. He persuades the incredulous Drago to hide himself in Genoveva's room, the latter having retired for the night's rest.

Margaretha, listening at the door, hears everything. She tells Golo that Count Siegfried lies wounded at Strassbourg; she has intercepted his letter to the Countess and prepares to leave for that town, in order to nurse the Count and kill him slowly by some deadly poison. Then Golo calls quickly for the servants, who all assemble to penetrate into their mistress' room. She repulses them full

of wounded pride. but at last she yields. and herself taking the candle to light the room proceeds to search, when Drago is found behind the curtains and at once silenced by Golo, who runs his dagger through his heart. Genoveva is led into the prison of the castle.

The third act takes place at Strassbourg, where Siegfried is being nursed by Margaretha. His strength defies her perfidy, and he is full of impatience to return to his loving wife, when Golo enters bringing him the news of her faithlessness.

Siegfried in despair bids Golo kill her with his own sword. He decides to fly into the wilderness, but before fulfilling his design. he goes once more to Margaretha, who has promised to show him all that passed at home during his absence. He sees Genoveva in a magic looking-glass. exchanging kindly words with Drago, but there is no appearance of guilt in their intercourse. The third image shows Genoveva sleeping on her couch, and Drago approaching her. With an imprecation Siegfried starts up. bidding Golo avenge him, but at the same instant the glass flies in pieces with a terrible crash, and Drago's ghost stands before Margaretha, commanding her to tell Siegfried the truth.

In the fourth act Genoveva is being led into the wilderness by two ruffians, who have orders to murder her. Before this is done, Golo approaches her once more, showing her Siegfried's ring and sword, with which he has been bidden kill her. He tries hard to win her, but she turns from him with scorn and loathing, preferring death to dishonor.

At length relinquishing his attempts, he beckons to the murderers to do their work and hands them Count Siegfried's weapon. Genoveva in her extreme need seizes the cross of the Saviour, praying fervently, and detains the ruffians till at the last moment Siegfried appears, led by the repentant Margaretha. There ensues a touching scene of forgiveness, while Golo rushes away to meet his fate by falling over a precipice.

THE GOLDEN CROSS.

Opera in two acts by Ignaz Brüll.

Text by Mosenthal.

Brüll, born at Prossnitz in Moravia, Nov. 7th, 1846, received his musical education in Vienna and is well known as a good pianist. He has composed different operas, of which however the above-mentioned is the only popular one.

This charming little opera. which rendered its composer famous, has passed beyond the frontiers of Germany and is now translated into several languages.

The text is skillfully arranged, and so combined as to awaken our interest.

The scene is laid in a village near Melun in the years between 1812 and 15.

Nicolas (or Cola) Pariset, an innkeeper, is betrothed to his cousin Therese. Unfortunately just on his wedding-day a sergeant, named Bombardon, levies him for the army, which is to march against the Russians. Vainly does Therese plead for her betrothed, and equally in vain is it that she is joined

in her pleading by Nicolas' sister Christine. The latter is passionately attached to her brother, who has hitherto been her only care. Finally Christine promises to marry any man who will go as substitute for her brother. Gontran de l'Ancry, a young nobleman, whose heart is touched by the maiden's tenderness and beauty, places himself at Bombardon's disposal and receives from him the golden cross, which Christine has placed in his hands, to be offered as a pledge of fidelity to her brothers deliverer. Christine does not get to know him as Gontran departs immediately. The act closes with Cola's marriage.

The second act takes place two years later. Cola, who could not be detained from marching against the enemy, has been wounded, but saved from being killed by an officer, who received the bullet instead. Both return to Cola's house as invalids and are tended by the two women. The strange officer, who is no other than Gontran, loves Christine and she returns his passion, but deeming herself bound to another, she does not betray her feeling. Gontran is about to bid her farewell, but when in the act of taking leave, he perceives her love and tells her that he is the officer, who was once substitute for her brother in the war.

Christine is full of happiness; Gontran when asked for the token of her promise, tells her, that the cross was taken from him, as he lay senseless on the field of battle. At this moment Bombardon, returning also as invalid, presents the cross to Christine, and she, believing that Gontran has lied

to her and that Bombardon is her brother's substitute, promises her hand to him, with a bleeding heart, but Bombardon relates that the true owner of the cross has fallen on the battle-field and that he took it from the dead body. Christine now resolves to enter in a convent, when suddenly Gontran's voice is heard. Bombardon recognizes his friend, whom he believed to be dead, everything is explained and the scene ends with the marriage of the good and true lovers.

HANS HEILING.

Romantic opera in three acts with a prelude
by Heinrich Marschner.
Text by Eduard Devrient.

The text to this opera, which was written by the celebrated actor and sent to Marschner anonymously, so struck the composer by its beauty that he adapted music to it, music which ought to be heard much oftener on our stages, on account of its freshness and of its healthy dramatic action, which never flags, but continues to interest and move the hearer with ever-increasing effect till the end is reached.

The contents are as follows:

Hans Heiling, King of the gnomes, has fallen in love with a daughter of the earth, the charming Anna. This maiden, a poor country-girl in the first freshness of youth, has been induced by her mother to consent to a betrothal with the rich stranger, whom she esteems but nothing more, her heart not yet having been touched by love.

In the prelude we are introduced into the depths of earth, where the gnomes work and toil incessantly, carrying glittering stones, gold and silver and accumulating all the treasures, on which men's hearts are set.

Their King announces to them, that he will no longer be one of theirs; he loves and therefore he resigns his crown. All the passionate entreatings of his mother and of the gnomes are of no avail. At the Queen's bidding he takes with him a magic book, without which he should lose his power over the gnomes, and after giving to her beloved son a set of luminous diamonds mother and son part, Heiling with joy in his heart, the mother in tears and sorrow.

In the first act Heiling arises from the earth, for ever closing the entrance to the gnomes.

Anna greets him joyously and Gertrud, her mother, heartily seconds the welcome. Heiling gives to his bride a golden chain, and Anna adorning herself, thinks with pleasure, how much she will be looked at and envied by her companions. She fain would show herself at once and begs Heiling to visit a public festival with her. But Heiling by nature serious and almost taciturn, refuses her request. Anna pouts, but she soon forgets her grief, when she sees the curious signs of erudition in her lovers room. Looking over the magic book, the leaves begin to turn by themselves, quicker and quicker, the strange signs seem to grow, to threaten her, until stricken with horrible fear Anna cries out, and Heiling, turning to her, sees too late

what she has done. Angry at her curiosity, he pushes her away, but she clings to him with fervent entreaties to destroy the dreadful book. His love conquers his reason; and he throws the last link which connects him with his past into the fire. A deep thunder-peal is heard. Anna thanks him heartily, but from this hour the seed of fear and distrust grows in her heart.

Heiling, seeing her still uneasy, agrees to visit the festival with her upon condition that she refrains from dancing. She gladly promises, but as soon as they come to the festival, Anna is surrounded by the village-lads, who entreat her to dance. They dislike the stranger, who has won the fairest maiden of the village, and Conrad the hunter, who has long loved Anna, is particularly hard on his rival. He mocks him, feeling that Heiling is not what he seems, and tries to lure Anna away from his side. At last Heiling grows angry, forbidding Anna once more to dance. She is wounded by his words and telling him abruptly, that she is not married yet and that she never will be his slave, she leaves him.

In despair Heiling sees her go away with Conrad, dancing and frolicking.

In the second act we find Anna in the forest. She is in a deep reverie; her heart has spoken, but alas, not for her bridegroom, whom she now fears; it only beats for Conrad, who has owned his love to her. Darkness comes on and the gnomes appear with their Queen, who reveals to the frightened girl the origin of her bridegroom and entreats

her to give back the son to his poor bereft mother. When the gnomes have disappeared, Conrad overtakes Anna, and she tells him all, asking his help against her mysterious bridegroom. Conrad, seeing that she returns his love, is happy. He has just obtained a good situation and will now be able to wed her.

He accompanies her home, where Gertrud welcomes them joyously, having feared that Anna had met with an accident in the forest.

While the lovers are together, Heiling enters, bringing the bridal jewels. Mother Gertrud is dazzled, but Anna shrinks from her bridegroom. When he asks for an explanation, she tells him that she knows of his origin. Then all his hopes die within him, but determined that his rival shall not be happy at his cost he hurls his dagger at Conrad and takes flight.

In the last act Heiling is alone in a ravine in the mountains. He has sacrificed everything and gained nothing. Sadly he decides to return to the gnomes. They appear at his bidding, but they make him feel, the he no longer has any power over them, and by way of adding still further to his sorrows they tell him that his rival lives and is about to wed Anna. Then indeed all seems lost to the poor dethroned King. In despair and repentance he casts himself to the earth. But the gnomes, seeing that he really has abandoned all earthly hopes, swear fealty to him once more and return with him to their Queen, by whom he is received with open arms.

Meanwhile Conrad, who only received a slight wound from Heiling's dagger and has speedily recovered, has fixed his wedding-day and we see Anna, the happy bride in the midst of her companions, prepared to go to church with he lover. But when she looks about her, Heiling is at her side, come to take revenge. Conrad would fain aid her, but his sword breaks before it touches Heiling, who invokes the help of his gnomes. They appear, but at the same moment the Queen is seen, exhorting her son to pardon and to forget. He willingly follows her away into his kingdom of night and darkness, never to see earth's surface again. The anxious peasants once more breathe freely and join in common thanks to God.

HENRY THE LION.

Opera in four acts by Edmund Kretschmer.

This opera has not had the same success as the Folkungs, which may be attributed in part to the subject, which is less attractive. Nevertheless it has great merit, and has found its way to the larger stages of Germany. The libretto is written by Kretschmer himself. The background is in this instance also historical.

The scene which takes us back to the middle of the 12th century is laid, in the first act, in Rome, in the second and fourth in Henry the Lion's castle and in the third act on the coast of Ancona.

In the first act Henry's praise is sung; he has gained the victory for his Emperor, Frederick Bar-

barossa, over the Italians. Frederick enters, thanking the Duke heartily for his fidelity and fortitude. A stranger, named Astoc, comes, prophesying an unhappy end to the Emperor, if he continue to seek his laurels in strange lands. To the anger of everybody Henry seconds him, entreating his Master to return into his own country, where his presence is necessary. The Emperor rebukes him sternly, Henry grows hot, and is finally by order of Frederick fettered and led away.

The second act shows the park in Henry's castle. His lovely wife Clementina, whose veil he wears on his helmet as a talisman, receives the country-people, who come to congratulate her on the first anniversary of her wedding-day. Irmgard, sister-in-law of Duke Henry, sees with envy how much Clementine is loved by everyone; she had herself hoped to become Duchess of Saxony, and from the time when Henry brought home his lovely bride, Irmgard has hated her. Conrad von Wettin, Henry's friend, appears in pilgrim's garb, to announce to the lonely wife the sad news of her husband's captivity and she at once resolves to travel to Ancona in order to entreat the Emperor's pardon.

Irmgard, thinking she sees in the disguised pilgrim, whose gait she recognizes to be that of a knight, a lover of Clementina's, believes that already the day of revenge is dawning.

In the third act the Emperor mourns the loss of his bravest hero, who firmly refuses to retract his rash words. A German song is heard, and

Conrad von Wettin presents a young minstrel to the homesick Prince. The former begs for the favor of celebrating the coming festival in a German song. This is permitted and the festival begins. The Anconites, whom Frederick delivered from their captivity, appear, to thank him, then Henry the Lion is conducted to his presence and ordered to ask his forgiveness. But Henry repeats that he did nothing wrong in telling the truth. The Emperor decides to give him an hour for reflection, after which if Henry does not bend his will, he shall be banished.

When this hard sentence is heard, Clementina in minstrel's guise sings her song of the German's fidelity to his Prince and his country, and of his wife's faithfulness, as her highest glory.

The song so touches the Emperor, that he bids her ask a favor. She takes Henry the Lion's sword and buckler, which are lying near, and handing them to the captive, entreats the Emperor to give him his liberty and to pardon him. Her request is granted by Frederick; and Henry, shamed by his Prince's magnanimity, bends his knee, swearing eternal fidelity to him. From Henry the young minstrel only asks a piece of the veil fastened round his helmet, in memory of his deliverance.

The last act carries us back to Henry's castle where the wife receives her husband full of joy. Clementina asks for the missing piece of veil, and Henry tells her how he gave it away. In the midst of this intercourse horns sound and the Emperor appears with his whole suite. He comes

to recompense his hero, who has again won for him honor and glory, with the duchy of Bavaria. Henry presents his consort, as the best and most faithful of wives, when Irmgard steps forth, accusing her sister-in-law of faithlessness, and relating that she left the castle with a young knight in pilgrim's attire, and only returned when the news spread, that the Duke would come home victorious. Clementina is too proud, to defend herself and forbids even Conrad von Wettin to speak.

Every body is convinced of her innocence, but her husband, always rash and violent, turns from her, when she refuses to say nay, and banishing her from his castle, casts his glove before Conrad von Wettin.

Clementina silently goes away, but soon reappears in her minstrel's garb; with the piece of veil in her hand she sings the song, which they heard in Ancona. Now she is at once recognized and the opera ends with a paean of praise to the faithfulness of German wives.

LES HUGUENOTS.

Grand opera in five acts by Giacomo Meyerbeer.
Text by Scribe.

This is the best opera of this fertile composer, and one with which only his „Robert le diable" can compare.

The music is not only interesting, but highly dramatic; the „mise en scene", the brillant orchestration, the ballet, everything is combined to fascinate the hearer. We find such an abundance

of musical ideas, that we feel Berlioz but spoke the truth, when he said that it would do for twenty others of its kind.

The scene is laid in France, at the time of the bloody persecutions of the Protestants or Huguenots by the Catholics. The Duke of Medicis has apparently made peace with Admiral Coligny, the greatest and most famous of the Huguenots, and we are introduced into the castle of Count Nevers, where the catholic noblemen receive Raoul de Nangis, a protestant, who has lately been promoted to the rank of captain. During their meal they speak of love and its pleasures, and everybody is called on to give the name of his sweetheart. Raoul begins, by telling them, that once when taking a walk, he surprised a band of students, molesting a lady in a litter. He rescued her and as she graciously thanked him for his gallant service, he thought her more beautiful than any maiden he had ever before seen. His heart burnt with love for her, though he did not know her name. While Raoul drinks with the noblemen, Marcel his old servant warns him of the danger of doing so.

Marcel is a strict old protestant and sings a ballad of the Huguenots to the young people, a song wild and fanatic. They laugh at his impotent wrath, when a lady is announced to Count Nevers, in whom Raoul recognizes the lady of his dreams.

Of course he believes her false and bad, while as a matter of fact she only comes to beseech Nevers, her destined bridegroom, to set her free. Nevers does so, though not without pain. When he re-

turns to his companions, he conceals the result of the interview, and presently Urban, a page, enters with a little note for Raoul de Nangis, in which he is ordered to attend a lady, unknown to him. The others recognize the seal of Queen Margarita of Valois, and finding him so worthy, at once seek to gain his friendship.

In the second act we find Raoul with the beautiful Queen, who is trying to reconcile the Catholics with the Protestants. To this end the Queen has resolved to unite Raoul with Valentine, her lady of honor, and daughter of the Count of St. Bris, a staunch catholic. Valentine tells her heart's secret to her mistress, for to her it was that Raoul brought assistance, and she loves him. The noble Raoul, seeing Margarita's beauty and kindness, vows himself her knight, when suddenly the whole court enters to render her homage. Recognizing her at last to be the Queen, Raoul is all the more willing to fulfil her wishes, and offers his hand in reconciliation to the proud St. Bris, promising to wed his daughter. But when he recognizes in her the unknown lady, whom he believes to be so unworthy, he takes back his word. All are surprised, and the offended father vows bloody vengeance.

In the third act Marcel brings a challenge to St. Bris, which the latter accepts, but Maurevert, a fanatical catholic nobleman, tells him of other ways in which to annihilate his foe. Valentine though deadly offended with her lover, resolves to save him. Seeing Marcel, she bids him tell his master, not

to meet his enemy alone. Meanwhile Raoul is already on the spot, and so is St. Bris with four witnesses. While they fight, a quarrel arises between the catholic and the protestant citizens, which is stopped by Queen Margarita. The enemies accuse each other, and when the Queen is in doubt as to whom she shall believe, Valentine appears to bear witness. Then Raoul hears that her interview with Nevers had been but a farewell, sought for but to loosen for ever the ties which her father had formed for her against her will but the knowledge of his error comes too late, for St. Bris has once more promised his daughter to Nevers, who at this moment arrives with many guests, invited for the wedding. The presence of the Queen preserves peace between the different parties, but Raoul leaves the spot with death in his heart.

In the fourth act the dreadful night of St. Bartholomew is already beginning.

We find Valentine in her room despairing. Raoul comes to take a last farewell, but almost immediately St. Bris enters with a party of Catholics and Raoul is obliged to hide in the adjoining room. There he hears the whole conspiracy for the destruction of the Protestants, beginning with their leader, Admiral Coligny. The Catholics all assent to this diabolical plot; Nevers alone refuses to soil his honor, and swears only to fight in open battle. The others, fearing treason, decide to bind and keep him prisoner until the next morning. Raoul prepares to save his brethren or die with them. Vain are Valentine's entreaties; though she confesses

to m[illegible]e for him, he yet leaves her, though with a great effort, to follow the path of duty.

In the last act Raoul rushes pale and bloody into the hall, where Queen Margarita sits with her husband, Henry of Navarre, surrounded by the court.

He tells them of the terrific events, which are going on outside, and beseeches their help. It is too late however, Coligny has already fallen, and with him most of the Huguenots.

Raoul meets Valentine once more: she promises to save him, if he will go over to her faith. But Marcel reminds him of his oath, and Valentine, seeing that nothing can move her lover's fortitude and firmness, decides to remain with him. She accepts his creed and so they meet death together. Valentine falling by the side of her deadly wounded lover, both praising God with their last breath.

JEAN DE PARIS.

Comic opera in two acts by Adrien Boieldieu.
Text by St. Just.

After a lapse of many years this spirited little opera has again been put upon the stage and its success has shown, that true music never grows old.

Next to the „Lady in white" Jean de Paris is decidedly the best of Boieldieu's works; the music is very graceful, fresh and lively, and the plot, through simple and harmless is full of chivalric honor and very winning.

The scene takes us back to the 17th century and we find ourselves in an inn of the Pyrenees.

The young and beautiful Princess of Navarre

being widowed and her year of mourning having passed, is induced by her brother, the King of Navarre, to marry again. The French Crown-Prince has been selected by the two courts as her future husband, but both parties are of a somewhat romantic turn of mind and desire to know each other, before being united for life.

For this purpose the Prince undertakes a journey to the Pyrenees, where he knows the Princess to be.

In the first scene we see preparations being made for the reception of the Princess, whose arrival has been announced by her seneshal. In the midst of the bustle there enters a simple Page to demand rooms for his master. As he is on foot the host treats him spitefully, but his daughter Lorezza, pleased with his good looks, promises him a good dinner. While they are still debating, the numerous suite of the Prince comes up and without further ado takes possession of the house and stables, which have been prepared for the Princess and her people. The host begins to feel more favorably inclined towards the strange Seigneur, though he does not understand, how a simple citizen of Paris (this is the Prince's incognito), can afford such luxury.

By the time Monsieur Jean de Paris arrives, the host's demeanour has entirely changed and seeing two large purses with gold, he abandons the whole house to the strange guest, hoping that he shall have prosecuted his journey before the arrival of the Princess. But he has been mistaken, for

no sooner are Jean de Paris' people quartered in the house, than the Seneshal, a pompous Spanish Grandee arrives, to announce the coming of the Princess. The host is hopelessly embarrassed and the Seneshal rages at the impudence of the citizen, but Jean de Paris quietly intimates, that the house and everything in it are hired by him, and courteously declares, that he will play the host and invite the Princess to his house and dinner.

While the Seneshal is still stupefied by such unheard-of impudence, the Princess arrives, and at once takes everybody captive by her grace and loveliness. Jean de Paris is fascinated and the Princess, who instantly recognizes in him her future bridegroom, is equally pleased by his appearance, but resolves to profit and to amuse herself by her discovery.

To the Seneshal's unbounded surprise she graciously accepts Jean's invitation.

In the second act the preparation for the dinner of the honored guests have been made. Olivier the Page shows pretty Lorezza the minuets of the ladies at court, and she dances in her simple country-fashion, until Olivier seizes her and they dance and sing together.

Jean de Paris stepping in, sings an air in praise of God, beauty and chivalry and when the Princess appears, he leads her to dinner, to the unutterable horror of the Seneshal. Dinner, service, plate, silver, all is splendid and all belongs to Jean de Paris, who sings a tender minstrel's-song to the Princess; she sweetly answers him, and telling him,

that she has already chosen her knight, who is true, honest and of her own rank, makes him stand on thorns for a while, lest he be too late, — until he perceives that she only teazes in order to punish him for his own comedy. Finally they are enchanted with each other, and when the people come up, the Prince, revealing his true name, presents the Princess as his bride, bidding his suite render homage to their mistress. The Seneshal humbly asks forgiveness, and all unite in a chorus in praise of the beautiful pair.

JESSONDA.

Opera in three acts by Louis Spohr.
Text by Henry Gehe.

Spohr wrote this opera by way of inauguration to his charge as master of the court-chapel at Cassel, and with it he added to the fame, which he had long before established as master of the violin and first-rate composer. His music is sublime, and sheds a wealth of glory on the somewhat imperfect text.

The story introduces us to Goa on the coast of Malabar at the beginning of the 16th century.

A Rajah has just died and is bewailed by his people, and Jessonda, his widow, who was married to the old man against her will, is doomed to be burnt with him, according to the country's laws. Nadori, a young priest of the God Brahma is to announce her fate to the beautiful young widow. But Nadori is not a Brahmin by his own choice; he is young and passionate, and though it is for-

bidden to him to look at women. he at once falls in love with Jessonda's sister Amazili, whom he meets when on his sad errand. He promises to help her in saving her beloved sister from a terrible death.

Jessonda meanwhile hopes vainly for the arrival of the Portuguese General, Tristan d' Acunha, to whom she pledged her faith long ago, when a cruel fate separated her from him. She knows that the Portuguese are at this moment besieging Goa, which formerly belonged to them. Jessonda is accompanied by her women through the Portuguese camp, to wash away in the floods of the Ganges the last traces of earthliness. She sacrifices a rose to her early love.

Turning back into the town, she is recognized by Tristan, but alas, a truce forbids him to make an assault on the town in order to deliver his bride. Jessonda is led back in triumph by the High-priest Daudon, to die an untimely death.

In the third act Nadori visits Tristan in secret, to bring the welcome news that Daudon himself broke the truce, by sending two spies into the enemies' camp to burn their ships. This act of treachery frees Tristan from his oath. Nadori conducts him and his soldiers through subterranean passages into the temple, where he arrives just in time to save Jessonda from the High-priest's sword She gives him hand and heart, and Nadori is united to her sister Amazili.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

Grand opera in three acts by Gluck.

Text of the original rearranged by R. Wagner.

This opera, though it does not stand from the point of view of the artist on the same level with Iphigenia in Tauris, deserves nevertheless to be represented on every good stage. It may be called the first part of the tragedy, and Iphigenia in Tauris very beautifully completes it. The music is sure to be highly relished by a cultivated hearer, characterized as it is by a simplicity which often rises into grandeur and nobility of utterance.

The first scene represents Agamemnon rent by a conflict between his duty and his fatherly love; the former of which demands the sacrifice of his daughter, for only then will a favorable wind conduct the Greeks safely to Ilion. Kalchas, the High-priest of Artemis, appears to announce her dreadful sentence. Alone with the King, Kalchas vainly tries to induce the unhappy father to consent to the sacrifice.

Meanwhile Iphigenia, who has not received Agamemnon's message, which ought to have prevented her undertaking the fatal journey, appears with her mother Klytemnestra. They are received with joy by the people. Agamemnon secretly informs his spouse, that Achilles, Iphigenia's betrothed, has proved unworthy of her, and that she is to return to Argos at once. — Iphigenia gives way to her feelings. Achilles appears, the lovers are soon reconciled and prepare to celebrate their nuptials.

In the second act Iphigenia is adorned for her wedding and Achilles comes to lead her to the altar, when Arkas, Agamemnon's messenger, informs them that death awaits Iphigenia.

Klytemnestra in despair appeals to Achilles and the bridegroom swears to protect Iphigenia. She alone is resigned in the belief that it is her father's will that she should face this dreadful duty. Achilles reproaches Agamemnon wildly and leaves the unhappy father a prey to mental torture. At last he decides to send Arkas at once to Mykene with mother and daughter and to hide them there, until the wrath of the goddess be appeased. But it is too late.

In the third act the people assemble before the Royal tent and with much shouting and noise demand the sacrifice. Achilles in vain implores Iphigenia to follow him. She is ready to be sacrificed, while he determines to kill anyone, who dares touch his bride. Klytemnestra then tries everything in her power to save her. She offers herself in her daughter's stead and finding it of no avail at last sinks down in a swoon. The daughter, having bade her an eternal farewell, with quiet dignity allows herself to be led to the altar. When her mother awakes, she rages in impotent fury; then she hears the people's hymn to the goddess, and rushes out to die with her child. — The scene changes. — The High-priest at the altar of Artemis is ready to pierce the innocent victim. A great tumult arises, Achilles with his native Thessaliens makes his way through the crowd, in order to save Iphigenia, who loudly

invokes the help of the goddess. But at this moment a loud thunder-peal arrests the contending parties, and when the mist, which has blinded all, has passed, Artemis herself is seen in a cloud with Iphigenia kneeling before her.

The goddess announces that it is Iphigenia's high mind, which she demands and not her blood; she wishes to take her into a foreign land, where she may be her priestess and atone for the sins of blood of Atreus.

A wind favorable to the fleet has risen, and the people filled with gratitude and admiration behold the vanishing cloud and praise the goddess.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

Opera in four acts by Gluck.

Text by Guillard.

Gluck's Iphigenia stands highest among his dramatic compositions. It is eminently classic and so harmoniously finished that Herder called its music sacred.

The libretto is excellent. It follows pretty exactly the Greek original.

Iphigenia, King Agamemnon's daughter, who has been saved by the goddess Diana (or Artemis) from death at the altar of Aulis, has been carried in a cloud to Tauris, where she is compelled to be High-priestess in the temple of the barbarous Scythians. There we find her, after having performed her cruel service for fifteen years. — Human sacrifices are required, but more than once she has saved a poor stranger from this awful lot.

Iphigenia is much troubled by a dream, in which she saw her father deadly wounded by her mother and herself about to kill her brother Orestes. She bewails her fate, in having at the behest of Thoas, King of the Scythians, to sacrifice two strangers, who have been thrown on his shores. Orestes and his friend Pylades, for these are the strangers, are led to death, loaded with chains.

Iphigenia, hearing that they are her countrymen, resolves to save at least one of them, in order to send him home to her sister Electra. She does not know her brother Orestes, who, having slain his mother, has fled, pursued by the furies, but an inner voice makes her chose him as a messenger to Greece. A lively dispute arises between the two friends; at last Orestes prevails upon Iphigenia, to spare his friend, by threatening to destroy himself with his own hands, his live being a burden to him. Iphigenia reluctantly complies with his request, giving the message for her sister to Pylades.

In the third act Iphigenia vainly tries to steel her heart against her victim. At last she seizes the knife, but Orestes' cry: „So you also were pierced by the sacrificial steel, O my sister Iphigenia!" arrests her; the knife falls from her hands, and there ensues a touching scene of recognition.

Meanwhile Thoas, who has heard that one of the strangers was about to depart, enters the temple with his body-guard, and though Iphigenia tells him, that Orestes is her brother and entreats him to spare Agamemnon's son, Thoas determines to sacrifice him and his sister Iphigenia as well. But

his evil designs are frustrated by Pylades, who, returning with several of his countrymen, stabs the King of Tauris. The goddess Diana herself appears and helping the Greeks in their fight, gains for them the victory. Diana declares herself appeased by Orestes' repentance and allows him to return to Mykene with his sister, his friend and all his followers.

JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

Opera in three acts by Etienne Henri Mehul.

Text after Alexander Duval.

This opera, which has almost disappeared from the French stage, is still esteemed in Germany and always will be so, because, though clad in the simplest garb, and almost without any external outfit, its music is grand, noble and classic; it equals the operas of Gluck, whose influence may be traced, but it is free from all imitation. Here we have true music, and the deep strain of patriarchal piety so touching in the Biblical recital finds grand expression.

Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was sold by his brothers, has by his wisdom saved Egypt from threatened famine; he resides as governor in Memphis under the name of Cleophas. But though much honored by the King and all the people, he never ceases to long for his old father, whose favorite child he was.

Driven from Palestine by this same famine, Jacob's sons are sent to Egypt to ask for food and hospitality. They are tormented by pangs of con-

science, which Simeon is hardly able to conceal, when they are received by the governor, who at once recognizes them. Seeing their sorrow and repentance, he pities them, and promises to receive them all hospitably. He does not reveal himself, but goes to meet his youngest brother Benjamin and his blind father, whose mourning for his lost son has not been diminished by the long years. Joseph induces his father and brother to partake in the honors, which the people render to him. The whole family is received in the governor's palace, where Simeon consumed by grief and conscience-stricken, at last confesses the selling of Joseph to his father. Full of horror Jacob curses and disowns his ten sons. But Joseph intervenes. Making himself known, he grants full pardon and entreats his father to do the same.

The old man yields, and together they praise God's providence and omnipotence.

LA JUIVE (THE JEWESS).

Grand opera in five acts by Halévy.

Text by Eugène Scribe.

This opera created a great sensation, when it first appeared on the stage of the Grand Opera at Paris in the year 1835, and it has never lost its attraction. It was one of the first grand operas to which brilliant mise-en-scène, gorgeous decorations etc., added success.

Halévy's great talent lies in orchestration, which is here rich and effective; his style, half French,

half Italian, is full of beautiful effects of a high order.

The libretto is one of the best which was ever written by the dexerous and fertile Scribe.

The scene of action is laid in Constance, in the year 1414 during the council. In the first act the opening of the council is celebrated with great pomp.

The Catholics, having gained a victory over the Hussites, Huss is to be burnt, and the Jews, equally disliked, are oppressed and put down still more than before. All the shops are closed, only Eleazar, a rich Jewish jeweller has kept his open, and is therefore about to be imprisoned and put to death. when Cardinal de Brogni intervenes, and saves the Jew and his daughter Recha from the people's fury. The Cardinal has a secret liking for Eleazar, though he once banished him from Rome. He hopes to gain news from him of his daughter, who was lost in early childhood. But Eleazar hates the Cardinal bitterly. When the mob is dispersed, Prince Leopold, the Imperial Commander-in-Chief, approaches Recha. Under the assumed name of Samuel he has gained her affections, and she begs him to be present at a religious feast, which is to take place that evening at her father's house. The act closes with a splendid procession of the Emperor and all his dignitaries. Ruggiero, the chief judge in Constance seeing the hated Jew and his daughter amongst the spectators, is about to seize them once more, when Prince Leopold steps between and delivers them, to Recha's great astonishment.

In the second act we are introduced to a great assembly of Jews, men and women, assisting at a religious ceremony. Samuel is there with them. The holy act is however interrupted by the Emperor's niece, Princess Eudora, who comes to purchase a golden chain, which once belonged to the Emperor Constantin, and which she destines for her bridegroom, Prince Leopold. Eleazar is to bring it himself on the following day. Samuel overhearing this is full of trouble. When the assembly is broken up and all have gone, he returns once more to Recha, and finding her alone, confesses that he is a Christian. Love prevails over Recha's filial devotion, and she consents to fly with her lover, but they are surprised by Eleazar. Hearing of Samuel's falseness, he first swears vengeance, but, mollified by his daughter's entreaties, he only bids him marry Recha. Samuel refuses and has to leave, the father cursing him, Recha bewailing her lover's falseness.

In the third act we assist at the Imperial banquet. Eleazar brings the chain, and is accompanied by Recha, who at once recognizes in Eudora's bridegroom, her lover, Samuel. She denounces the traitor, accusing him of living in unlawful wedlock with a Jewess, a crime, which is punishable by death.

Leopold (alias Samuel) is outlawed, the Cardinal Brogni pronounces the anathema upon all three, and they are put into prison.

In the fourth act Eudora visits Recha in prison, and by her prayers not only overcomes Recha's

hate, but persuades her to save Leopold by declaring him innocent. Recha, in her noblemindedness, pardons Leopold and Eudora, and resolves to die alone.

Meanwhile the Cardinal has an interview with Eleazar, who tells him that he knows the Jew, who once saved the Cardinal's little daughter from the flames. Brogni vainly entreats him to reveal the name. He promises to save Recha, should Eleazar be willing to abjure his faith, but the latter remains firm, fully prepared to die.

In the fifth act we hear the clamors of the people who furiously demand the Jew's death.

Ruggiero announces to father and daughter the verdict of death by fire. Leopold is set free through Recha's testimony. When in view of the funeral pile, Eleazar asks Recha, if she would prefer to live in joy and splendor and to accept the Christian faith, but she firmly answers in the negative, Then she is led on to death, and just she is plunged into the glowing furnace, when Eleazar, pointing to her, informs the Cardinal, that the poor victim is his long-lost daughter; then Eleazar follows Recha into the flames, while Brogni falls back senseless.

JUNKER HEINZ (SIR HARRY).

Opera in three acts by Karl von Perfall.

Text after Hertz's poem: Henri of Suabia by Franz Grandour.

This opera composed recently by the Superintendent of the Royal Opera in Munich, has made its way to the most renowned stages in Germany,

which proves that the composition is not a common one.

Indeed, though it is not composed in the large style to which we are now accustomed from hearing so much of Wagner, the music is interesting, particularly so, because it is entirely original and free from reminiscences. — There are some little masterpieces in it, which deserve to become popular on account of their freshness; wit and humor however are not the composer's „forte" and so the first act, in which the vagabonds present themselves. is by far the least interesting.

The libretto is very well done; it has made free use of Hertz's pretty poem.

The scene is laid in the beginning of the 11th century. The first act lands us near Esslingen in Suabia, the two following near Speier.

Three swindlers concoct a plot to acquire wealth by robbing the Emperor's daughter. To this end, one of them, Marudas, a former clerk. has forged a document, in which the Emperor of Byzantium asks for the hand of Agnes, daughter of Conrad, Emperor of Germany, who just approaching with his wife Gisela, is received with acclamation by the citizens of Esslingen. Soon after, the three vagabonds appear in decent clothes, crying for help; they pretend to have been attacked and robbed by brigands. Boccanera, the most insolent of them wears a bloody bandage round his head. The document is presented to the Emperor, who turns gladly to his wife and tells her of the flattering offer of the Greek Prince. After he has

ordered that the ambassadors be taken good care of, the Emperor is left alone with his wife. She tenderly asks him why he always seems so sorrowful and gloomy, and after a first evasive answer, he confides to his faithful wife what oppresses him.

Twenty years ago he gave orders to kill a little infant, the son of his deadliest enemy, Count of Calw, his astronomer Crusius having prophesied, that this child would wed the Emperor's daughter and reign after him. The remembrance of this cruelty now torments him, but Gisela consoles her husband, hoping and praying that God will pardon the repentant sinner. During this intercourse, a young man comes up, entreating the Emperor to read a document, which was given to the youth by his dying uncle and destined for the Emperor. As Conrad reads it, he learns that this youth is the child, he would have had killed years ago and who was carried to the foresters-house and brought up there. The Emperor and his wife thank Heaven, that they have been spared so dreadful a sin, but Conrad, afraid of the prophesy, determines to send the young man, who is called Junker Heinz, away. He gives him a document, in which he orders Count Gerold, governor of Speier, to give his daughter to the three ambassadors of the Emperor of Byzantium.

In the second act we see Agnes, the Emperor's daughter, working and singing with her damsels. She is well guarded by old Hiltrudis, but the worthy lady is obliged to leave her for some days and departs with many exhortations. Hardly has

she gone, than all the working-material disappears, and the maidens begin to sing and frolic. The appearance of Junker Heinz frightens them away. Heinz, who has ridden long, thinks to take a little rest, now that he sees the towers of Speier before him. He stretches himself on a mossy bank and is soon asleep. — Shortly afterwards the Princess Agnes peeps about with her companion Bertha. She is highly pleased with the appearance of the strange hunter, and seeing him asleep, she gazes at him, until she insensibly falls in love with him. Observing the document which the stranger has in his keeping, she takes and reads it, and disgusted with its contents throws it into the fountain, quickly fetching another parchment which was once given to her by her father, and which contains both permission to wish for something and her father's promise to grant her wish.

When Heinz awakes, and finds the loveliest of the maidens beside him, he falls as deeply in love as the young lady, but their tender interview is soon interrupted by the blowing of hunter's horns.

In the third act Count Gerold, who has come with a suite, to accompany the Princess on a hunt, is presented with the Emperor's document by Heinz, who cannot read and who is wholly ignorant of the change which Agnes has made. Though greatly astonished at the Emperor's command to wed Agnes to the bringer of his letter, Count Gerold is accustomed to obey, and Heinz, who first refuses compliance with the strange command, at once

acquiesces, when he sees that his lady-love and the Princess are one and the same person. About to go to church, they are detained by the Emperor, who scornfully charges Heinz with fraud.

But when Count Gerold presents the document, his scorn turns on Agnes and he orders her to a convent. Heinz fervently entreats the Emperor to pardon Agnes, and takes a tender farewell of her. On the point of departing for ever, he sees the three ambassadors, whom he recognizes and loudly denounces as robbers and swindlers. Boccanera is obliged to own that his wound came from Junker Heinz, who caught him stealing sheep. They are led to prison, while the Emperor, grateful to Heinz for his daughter's delivery from robbers, gives her to him and makes Heinz Duke of Suabia, persuaded that it is useless to fight against that which the stars have prophesied.

LOHENGRIN.

Romantic opera in three acts by **Richard Wagner.**

This is the most popular of all Wagner's operas. No need to say more about its music, which is so generally known and admired, that every child in Germany knows the graceful aria, where Lohengrin dismisses the swan, the superb bridal chorus etc.

Wagner again took his material from the old legend, which tells us of the mystical knight Lohengrin, (Veron of Percival), Keeper of the holy "Grail".

The scene is laid near Antwerp, where „Heinrich der Vogler" King of Germany, is just levying troops amongst his vassals of Brabant, to repulse the Hungarian invaders. The King finds the people in a state of great commotion, for Count Frederick Telramund accuses Elsa of Brabant of having killed her young brother Godfrey, heir to the Duke of Brabant, who died a short time ago, leaving his children to the care of Telramund. Elsa was to be Telramund's wife, but he wedded Ortrud of Friesland and now claims the deserted Duchy of Brabant.

As Elsa declares her innocence, not knowing what has become of her brother, who was taken from her during her sleep, the King resolves to decide by a tourney in which the whole matter shall be left to the judgment of God. Telramund, sure of his rights, is willing to fight with any champion, who may defend Elsa. All the noblemen of Brabant refuse to do so, and even the King, though struck by Elsa's innocent appearance, does not want to oppose his valiant and trustworthy warrior.

Elsa alone is calm, she trusts in the help of the heavenly knight, who has appeared to her in a dream, and publicly declares her intention of offering to her defender the crown and her hand. While she prays, there arrives a knight in silver armor: a swan draws his boat. He lands, Elsa recognizes the knight of her dream and he at once offers to fight for the accused maiden on two conditions, first that she shall become his wife, and

second, that she never will ask for his name and his descent.

Elsa solemnly promises, and the combat begins. The strange knight is victorious, and Telramund, whose life the stranger spares is with his wife Ortrud outlawed.

The latter is a sorceress; she has deceived her husband, who really believes in the murder of Godfrey, while as a matter of fact she has abducted the child. In the second act we see her at the door of the Ducal palace, where preparations for the wedding are already being made. She plans vengeance. Her husband, full of remorse and feeling that his wife has led him on to a shameful deed, curses her as the cause of his dishonor. She derides him and rouses his pride by calling him a coward. Then she pacifies him with the assurance, that she will induce Elsa to break her promise and ask for the name of her husband, being sure, that then all the power of this mysterious champion will vanish.

When Elsa steps on the balcony to confide her happiness to the stars, she hears her name spoken in accents so sad, that her tender heart is moved. Ortrud bewails her lot, invoking Elsa's pity. The Princess opens her door, urging the false woman to share her palace and her fortune. Ortrud at once tries to sow distrust in Elsa's innocent heart.

As the morning dawns, a rich procession of men and women throng to the Münster, where Elsa is to be united to her protector. Telramund tries vainly to accuse the stranger; he is pushed

back and silenced. As Elsa is about to enter the church, Ortrud steps forward, claiming the right of precedence. Elsa, frightened, repents when too late having protected her. Ortrud upbraids her with not even having asked her husband's name and descent. All are taken aback, but Elsa defends her husband, winning everybody by her quiet dignity.

She turns to Lohengrin for protection, but, alas, the venom rankles in her heart.

When they are all returning from church, Telramund once more steps forth, accusing Lohengrin and demanding from the King to know the stranger's name. Lohengrin declares that his name may not be told, excepting his wife ask. Elsa is in great trouble, but once more her love conquers, and she does not put the fatal question.

But in the third act, when the two lovers are alone she knows no rest. Although her husband asks her to trust him, she fears that he may once leave her as mysteriously, as he came, and at last she cannot refrain from asking the luckless question. From this moment all happiness is lost to her. Telramund enters to slay his enemy, but Lohengrin, taking his sword, kills him with one stroke. Then he leads Elsa before the King, and loudly announces his secret. He tells the astounded hearers, that he is the Keeper of the holy Grail. Sacred and invulnerable to the villain, a defender of right and virtue, he may stay with mankind as long as his name is unknown. But now he is obliged to reveal it. He is Lohengrin, son of Percival, King of the Grail, and is now compelled to leave his wife and return

to his home. The swan appears whose neck Lohengrin takes a golden ring, giving it to Elsa together with his sword and his golden horn.

Just as Lohengrin is about to depart Ortrud appears, triumphantly declaring, that it was she, who changed young Godfrey into a swan, and that Lohengrin would have freed him too, had Elsa not mistrusted her husband. — Lohengrin, hearing this, sends a fervent prayer to Heaven and loosening the swan's golden chain, the animal dips under water and in his stead rises Godfrey, the lawful heir of Brabant. A white dove descends to draw the boat in which Lohengrin glides away and Elsa falls senseless into her brother's arms.

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR.

Tragic opera in three acts by Gaëtano Donizetti.
Text from Scott's romance by Salvatore Cammerano.

This opera is Donizetti's master-piece and except his „Figlia del reggimento" and „Lucrezia Borgia" it is the only-one of his fifty operas, which is still given on all stages abroad. The chief parts, those of Lucia and Edgardo offer plenty of scope for the display of brilliant talent and Lucia in particular is a tragic heroine of the first rank.

In the libretto there is not much left of Scott's fine romance. Edgardo, the noble lover is most sentimental, and generally English characteristics have had to give place to Italian coloring.

Henry Ashton, Lord of Lammermoor has discovered that his sister Lucia loves his mortal enemy, Sir Edgardo of Ravenswood. He confides

to Lucia's tutor, Raymond, that he is lost, if Lucia does not marry another suitor of his (her brother's) choice.

Lucia and Edgardo meet in the park. Edgardo tells her, that he is about to leave Scotland for France in the service of his country. He wishes to be reconciled to his enemy, Lord Ashton, for though the latter has done him all kinds of evil, though he has slain his father and burnt his castle, Edgardo is willing to sacrifice his oath of vengeance to his love for Lucia. But the lady, full of evil forebodings, entreats him to wait and swears eternal fidelity to him. After having bound himself by a solemn oath, he leaves her half-distracted with grief.

In the second act Lord Ashton shows a forged letter to his sister, which goes to prove that her lover is false. Her brother now presses her more and more to wed his friend Arthur, Lord Bucklaw, declaring, that he and his party are lost and that Arthur alone can save him from the executioner's axe. At last when even her tutor Raymond beseeches her to forget Edgardo and, like the others, believes him to be faithless, Lucia consents to the sacrifice. The wedding takes place in great haste, but just as Lucia has finished signing the marriage-contract, Edgardo enters to claim her as his own.

With grief and unbounded passion he now sees in his bride a traitress, and tearing his ring of betrothal from her finger, he throws it at her feet.

Henry, Arthur and Raymond order the raving lover to leave the castle and the act closes in the midst of confusion and despair.

The third act opens with Raymond's announcement that Lucia has lost her reason and has killed her husband in the bridal room. Lucia herself enters to confirm his awful news; she is still in bridal attire and in her demented condition believes that Arthur will presently appear for the nuptial ceremony. Everybody is full of pity for her, and her brother repents his harshness, too late, alas! — Lucia is fast dying and Eliza leads her away amid the lamentations of all present.

Edgardo, hearing of these things, while wandering amid the tombs of his ancestors, resolves to see Lucia once more. When dying she asks for him, but he comes too late. The funeral-bells toll, and he stabs himself, praying to be united to his bride in heaven.

LUCREZIA BORGIA.

A tragic opera in three acts by Donizetti.
Text by Felice Romani after Victor Hugo's drama.

Donizetti's Lucrezia was one of the first tragic operas to command great success, notwithstanding its dreadful theme and its light music, which is half French, half Italian. It is in some respects the predecessor of Verdi's operas, Rigoletto, Trovatore etc., which have till now held their own in many theatres because the subject is interesting and the music may well entertain us for an evening, though its value often lies only in the striking harmonies. The libretto cannot inspire us with feelings of particular pleasure, the heroine, whose part is by far the best and most interesting, being

the celebrated murderess and poisoner Lucrezia Borgia. At the same time she gives evidence in her dealings with her son Genaro of possessing a very tender and motherly heart, and the songs, in which she pours out her love for him are really fine as well as touching.

Lucrezia, wife of Don Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara, goes to Venice in disguise, to see the son of her first marriage, Gennaro. In his earliest youth he was given to a fisherman, who brought him up, as his own son. — Gennaro feels himself attracted towards the strange and beautiful woman, who visits him, but hearing from his companions, who recognize and charge her with all sorts of crimes, that she is Lucrezia Borgia, he abhors her. Don Alfonso, not knowing the existence of this son of an early marriage, is jealous, and when Gennaro comes to Ferrara and in order to prove his hatred of the Borgias, tears off Lucrezia's name and scutcheon from the palace-gates Rustighello, the Duke's confidant is ordered to imprison him. Lucrezia, hearing from her servant Gubella, of the outrage to her name and honor complains to the Duke, who promises immediate punishment of the malefactor.

Gennaro enters, and terror-stricken Lucrezia recognizes her son. Vainly does she implore the Duke to spare the youth. With exquisite cruelty he forces her to hand the poisoned golden cup to the culprit herself, and, departing, bids her accompany her prisoner to the door. This order gives her an opportunity to administer an antidote by

which she saves Gennaro's life, and she implores him to fly. But Gennaro does not immediately follow her advice, being induced by his friend Orsini to assist at a grand festival at Prince Negroni's.

Unhappily all those young men, who formerly reproached and offended Lucrezia so mortally in presence of her son, are assembled there by Lucrezia's orders. She has mixed their wine with poison, and herself appears to announce their death. Horror-stricken she sees Gennaro, who was not invited, among them. He has partaken of the wine like the others, but on her offering him an antidote, he refuses to take it, as its quantity is insufficient for his friends, and he threatens to kill the murderess. Then she reveals the secret of his birth to him, but he only turns from this mother, for whom he had vainly longed his whole life, and dies. The Duke coming up to witness his wife's horrible victory, finds all either dead or dying and Lucrezia herself expires, stricken down by deadly remorse and pain.

THE MACCABEES.

Opera in three acts by Anton Rubinstein.

Text by Mosenthal, taken from Otto Ludwig's drama of the same name.

This opera when it appeared, created a great sensation in the musical world. In it the eminent pianist and composer has achieved a splendid success. The music belongs to the noblest and best and is in most masterly fashion adapted to the

Jewish character. Ludwig and Mosenthal, both names of renown in Germany, have given a libretto worthy of the music.

The hero is the famous warrior of the old Testament. The scene takes place 160 years before Christ, partly at Modin, a city in the mountains of Judah and partly in Jerusalem and its environs.

The first act shows Leah with three of her sons, Eleazar, Joarim and Benjamin. Eleazar is envious of Judah the eldest son, whose courage and strength are on everybody's lips, but his mother consoles him by a prophesy, that Eleazar shall one day be High-priest and King of the Jews.

The fête of the sheep-shearing is being celebrated, and Noëmi, Judah's wife, approaches Leah with garlands of flowers, asking for her benediction. But she is repulsed by her mother-in-law, who is too proud to recognize the low-born maid as her equal, and slights her son Judah for his love. She tries to incite him into rebellion against the Syrians, when Jojakim, a priest appears. He announces the death of Osias, High-priest of Zion and calls one of Leah's sons to the important office. — As Judah feels no vocation for such a burden, Eleazar, his mother's favorite is chosen, and so Leah sees her dream already fulfilled. They are about to depart, when the approaching army of the Syrians is announced. Terror seizes the people, as Georgias, the leader of the enemy marches up with his soldiers and loudly proclaims, that the Jews are to erect an altar to Pallas Athene, to

whom they must pray henceforth. Leah seeks to inflame Eleazar's spirit, but his courage fails him. The altar is soon erected, and as Gorgias sternly orders that sacrifices are to be offered to the goddess, Boas, Noëmis father is found willing to bow to the enemy's commands. But the measure is full. Judah steps forth and striking Boas, the traitor to their faith, dead, loudly praises Jehova. He calls his people to arms, and repulses the Syrians and Leah, recognizing her son's greatness, gives him her benediction.

The second act represents a deep ravine near Emaus; the enemy is beaten and Judah is resolved to drive him from Zion's walls, but Jojakim warns him not to profane the coming Sabbath.

Judah tries to overrule the priests and to excite the people, but he is not heard, and the enemy is able to kill the psalm-singing soldiers like lambs.

The next scene shows us Eleazar with Cleopatra, daughter of King Antiochus of Syria.

They love each other, and Eleazar consents to forsake his religion for her, while she promises to make him King of Jerusalem.

In the next scene Leah in the city of Modin is greeted with acclamations of joy, when Simei, a relative of the slain Boas appears to bewail Judah's defeat: Other fugitives coming up, confirm his narrative of the massacre. — Leah hears that Judah fled and that Antiochus approaches, conducted by her own son Eleazar. She curses the apostate. — She has still two younger sons, but the Israelites

take them from her to give as hostages to the King Antiochus. Leah is bound to a cypress-tree by her own people, who attribute their misfortunes to her and to her sons. Only Noëmi, the despised daughter-in-law remains to liberate the miserable mother, and together they resolve so ask the tyrant's pardon for the sons.

In the third act we find Judah, alone and unrecognized, in the deserted streets of Jerusalem. Hearing the prayers of the people that Judah may be sent to them, he steps forth and tells them who he is, and all sink at his feet, swearing to fight with him to the death. While Judah prays to God for a sign of grace, Noëmi comes with the dreadful news of the events at Modin, which still further rouses the anger and courage of the Israelites. Meanwhile Leah has succeeded in penetrating into Antiochus' presence to beg the lives of her children from him. Eleazar, Gorgias and Cleopatra join their prayers to those of the poor mother, and at last Antiochus consents, and the two boys are led into the room.

But the King only grants their liberty on condition, that they renounce their faith. They are to be burnt alive, should they abide by their heresy. The mother's heart is full of agony, but the children's noble courage prevails. They are prepared to die for their God, but the unhappy mother is not even allowed to share their death. When Eleazar sees his brothers' firmness, his conscience awakens, and notwithstanding Cleopatra's entreaties he joins them on their way to death. The hymns of the youthful martyrs are heard, but with the sound of their

voices there suddenly mingles that of a growing tumult. Antiochus falls, shot through the heart, and the Israelites rush in, headed by Judah, putting the Syrians to flight. Leah sees her people's victory, but the trial has been too great, she sinks back lifeless. Judah is proclaimed King of Zion, but he humbly bends his head, giving all glory to the Almighty God.

THE MAGIC FLUTE.

(DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE.)

Opera in two acts by Mozart.

Text by Schikaneder.

This last opera of Mozart's, written only a few months before his death, approaches so near to perfection, that one almost feels in it the motion of the spirit-wings which were so soon alas! to bear away Mozart's genius from earth, too early by far, for he died at the age of 35, having accomplished in this short space of time more than other great composers in a long life.

The magic flute is one of the most remarkable operas known on the stage. It is half fictitious, half allegorical. — The text, done by the old stage-director Schikaneder was long mistaken for a fiction without any common sense, but Mozart saw deeper, else he would not have adapted his wonderful music to it. — It is true that the tales of old Egypt are mixed up in a curious manner with modern free-masonry, but nobody, except a superficial observer, could fail to catch a deep moral sense in the naive rhymes.

The contents of the opera are the following: Prince Tamino, a youth as valiant as he is noble and virtuous, is implored by the Queen of Night, to save her daughter, whom the old and sage High-priest Sarastro has taken from her by force. The bereaved mother pours forth her woe in heart-melting sounds and promises everything to the rescuer of her child. Tamino is filled with ardent desire to serve her. — On his way he meets the gay Papageno, who at once agrees to share the Prince's adventures. Papageno is the gay element in the opera; always cheerful and in high spirits, his ever-ready tongue plays him many a funny trick. So we see him once with a lock on his mouth by way of punishment for his idle prating. As he promises never to lie any more, the lock is taken away by the three ladies of the Queen of Night.

Those ladies present Tamino with a golden flute, giving at the same time an instrument made with little silver bells to Papageno, both of which are to help them in times of danger. The Queen of Night even sends with them three boy-angels. These are to point out to them the ways and means by which they may attain their purpose.

Now the young and beautiful Princess Pamina is pursued by declarations of love from a negro-servant of Sarastro. Papageno comes to her rescue, frightening the negro Monostatos, with his feathery dress. Papageno, on the other hand fears the negro on account of his blackness, believing him to be the devil in person. Papageno escapes with Pamina, but the negro overtakes him with his servants

Then Papageno shakes his bells, and lo, all forgetting their wrath forthwith begin to dance.

Meanwhile Tamino reaches Sarastro's castle, and at once asks for the High-priest, poor Pamina's bitter enemy. The Underpriests do not allow him to enter, but explain that their Master Sarastro is as good as he is sage, and that he always acts for the best. They assure Tamino, that the Princess lives and is in no danger. Full of thanks, the Prince begins to play on his flute; and just then he hears Papageno's bells. At this juncture Sarastro appears, the wise Master, before whom they all bow. He punishes the wicked negro; but Tamino and his Pamina are not to be united without first having given ample proof of their love and constancy. Tamino determines to undergo whatever trials may await him, but the Queen of Night, knowing all, sends her three ladies, to deter Tamino and his comrade from their purpose. But all temptation is gallantly set aside; they have given a promise to Sarastro which they will keep.

Even the Queen of Night herself is unable to weaken their strength of purpose; temptations of every kind overtake them, but Tamino remains firm. He is finally initiated into the mysteries of the goddess Isis.

In the interval Pamina deems Tamino faithless. She would fain die, but the three celestial youths console her, by assuring her that Tamino's love is true, and that he passes through the most severe trials solely on her behalf.

On hearing this Pamina at once asks to share

in the trials, and so they walk together through fire and water, protected by the golden flute, as well as by their courage and constancy. They come out purified and happy.

Papageno, having lost his companion, has grown quite melancholy and longs for the little wife, that was promised to him and shown to him only for a few moments. He resolves at last to end his life by hanging himself, when the celestial youths appear, reminding him of his bells. He begins to shake them, and Papagena appears in feathery dress, the very counter-part of himself. All might now be well, were it not that the Queen of Night, a somewhat unreasonable lady, broods vengeance. She accepts the negro Monostatos as her avenger, and promises to give him her daughter. But already Sarastro has done his work; Tamino is united to his Pamina, and before the sunny light of truth everything else vanishes and sinks back into night.

MARGUERITE (OR FAUST.)

Opera in five acts by Charles Gounod.

The subject of this piece is taken from the first part of Goethe's greatest drama — „Faust".

Faust, a celebrated old Doctor, is consumed by an insatiable thirst for knowledge, but, having already lived through a long life devoted to the acquirement of learning and to hard work as a scholar without having his soul-hunger appreciably relieved is dissatisfied and in his disappointment wishes to be released from this life, which has grown to be a burden to him. At this moment

Mephistopheles, the incarnation of the Evil one, appears and persuades him to try life in a new shape. The old and learned Doctor has only known it in theory, Mephisto will now show it to him in practice and in all the splendor of youth and freshness. Faust agrees, and Mephisto endows him with youth and beauty. In this guise he sees earth anew. It is Easter-time. when all is budding, and aglow with freshness and young life and on such a bright spring-day he first sees Margaretha and at once offers her his arm.

But this lovely maiden, pure and innocent, and well guarded by a jealous brother, named Valentin, refuses his company somewhat sharply. — Nevertheless she cannot help seeing the grace and good bearing of the fine cavalier, and the simple village-maiden is inwardly pleased with his flattery. A bad fate wills it, that her brother Valentin, who is a soldier, has to leave on active service and after giving many good advices and warnings for his beautiful sister's wellfare he goes, and so Mephisto is able to introduce Faust to the unprotected girl by means of a message, which he is supposed to have received for an old aunt of Margaretha's, „Frau Marthe Schwertlein". This old gossip, hearing from Mephisto that her husband has been killed in battle, lends a willing ear to the flatteries of the cunning Devil: and Margaretha is left to Faust, who wins her by his love and easy manners. She is only a simple maiden, knowing nothing of the world's ways and wiles, and she accepts her lover's precious gifts with childish delight.

By and bye, her brother Valentin returns victorious from the war, but alas! too late! He challenges his sister's seducer: Mephisto however directs Faust's sword, and the faithful brother is much against Faust's own will slain, cursing his sister with his last breath.

Now Margaretha awakes to the awful reality of her situation and she shrinks from her brother's murderer. Everybody shuns her, and she finds herself alone and forsaken. In despair she seeks refuge in church, but her own conscience is not silenced: it accuses her more loudly than all the pious songs and prayers. Persecuted by evil spirits, forsaken and forlorn, Margaretha's reason gives way, and she drowns her new-born child.

Meanwhile Mephisto has done everything to stifle in Faust the pangs of conscience. Faust never wills the evil, he loves Margaretha sincerely, but the bad spirit urges him onward. He shows him all the joys and splendors of earth, and antiquity in its most perfect form in the person of Helena, but in the midst of all his orgies Faust sees Margaretha. He beholds her, pale, unlike her former self, in the white dress of the condemned, with a blood-red circle round the delicate throat. Then he knows no rest, he feels that she is in danger, and he bids Mephisto save her.

Margaretha has actually been thrown into prison for her deed of madness and now the executioner's axe awaits her. She sits on the damp straw, rocking a bundle, which she takes for her baby, and across her poor wrecked brain there

flit once more pictures of all the scenes of her short-lived happiness. Then Faust enters with Mephisto, and tries to persuade her to escape with them. But she instinctively shrinks from her lover, loudly imploring God's and the Saints' pardon. God has mercy on her, for, just as the bells are tolling for her execution, she expires, and her soul is carried to Heaven by angels, there to pray for her erring lover. Mephisto disappears into the earth.

MARTHA.

Comic opera in four acts by Flotow.
Text by W. Friedrich.

This charming opera finally established the renown of its composer, who had first found his way to public favor through „Stradella". — It ranks high among our comic operas, and has become as much liked as those of Lortzing and Nicolai.

Not the least of its merits lies in the text, which Friedrich worked out dexterously, and which is amusing and interesting throughout.

Lady Harriet Durham, tired of the pleasures and splendors of court, determines to seek elsewhere for a pastime, and hoping to find it in a sphere different from her own, disguises herself and her confidant Nancy as peasant-girls, in which garb they visit the fair at Richmond, accompanied by Lord Tristan, who is hopelessly enamoured of Lady Harriet and unwillingly complies with her wish to escort them to the adventure in the attire of a peasant. — They join the servant-girls, who are there to seek employment, and are hired by

a tenant Plumkett and his foster-brother Lionel, a youth of somewhat extraordinary behaviour. his air being noble and melancholy and much too refined for a country-squire, while the other, though somewhat rough. is frank and jolly in his manner.

The disguised ladies take the handsel from them, without knowing that they are bound by it, until the sheriff arrives to confirm the bargain. Now the joke becomes reality and they hear that they are actually hired as servants for a whole year.

Notwithstanding Lord Tristan's protestations, the ladies are carried off by their masters, who know them under the names of Martha and Julia.

In the second act we find the ladies in the company of the tenants, who set them instantly to work. Of course they are totally ignorant of household-work, and as their wheels will not go round, Plumkett shows them how to spin. In his rough but kind way he always commands and turns to Nancy, with whom he falls in love, but Lionel only asks softly when he wishes anything done. He has lost his heart to Lady Harriet and declares his love to her. Though she is pleased by his gentle behaviour, she is by no means willing to accept a country-squire and wounds him by her mockery. Meanwhile Plumkett has sought Nancy for the same purpose, but she hides herself and at last the girls are sent to bed very anxious and perplexed at the turn their adventure has taken. But Lord Tristan comes to their rescue in a coach and they take flight, vainly pursued by the tenants. — Plumkett swears to catch and punish them, but

Lionel sinks into deep melancholy, from which nothing arouses him.

In the third act we meet them at a court-hunt, where they recognize their hired servants in two of the lady-hunters. They assert their right, but the ladies disown them haughtily, and when Lionel, whose reason almost gives way under the burden of grief and shame, which overwhelms him at thinking himself deceived by Martha, tells the whole story to the astonished court, the ladies pronounce him insane and Lord Tristan sends him to prison for his insolence, notwithstanding lady Harriet and Nancy's prayer for his pardon.

Lionel gives a ring to Plumkett, asking him to show it to the Queen, his dying father having told him that it would protect him from every danger.

In the fourth act Lady Harriet feels remorse for the sad consequences of her haughtiness. She visits the prisoner to crave his pardon. She tells him, that she has herself carried his ring to the Queen and that he has been recognized by it as Lord Derby's son, once innocently banished from court, but whose innocence is now proved.

Then the proud lady offers hand and heart to Lionel, but he rejects her, believing himself duped. Lady Harriet, however who loves Lionel, resolves to win him against his will. She disappears, and dressing herself and Nancy in the former peasant's attire, she goes once more to the fair at Richmond, where Lionel is also brought by his friend Plumkett. He sees his beloved Martha

advance towards him, promising to renounce all splendors and live only for him; then his melancholy vanishes, and he weds her, his name and possessions being restored to him, while Plumkett obtains the hand of pretty Nancy, alias Julia.

THE MASTER-SINGERS OF NÜREMBERG.

Opera in three acts by Wagner.

This opera carries us back to the middle of the 16th century and the persons whom we meet are all historical.

Amongst the tradesmen, whose rhyme-making has made them famous, Hans Sachs, the shoemaker is the most conspicuous.

The music is highly original, though not precisely melodious and is beautifully adapted to its characteristically national subject.

In the first act we see St. Catharine's church in Nüremberg, where Divine Service is being celebrated, in preparation for St. John's day. Eva, the lovely daughter of master Pogner the jeweller, sees the young knight Walter Stolzing, who has sold his property in Franconia to become a citizen of Nüremberg, and who has fallen in love with Eva. She tells him that her hand is promised to the winner of the prize for a master-song, to be sung on the following morning.

We are now called to witness one of those ancient customs still sometimes practiced in old German towns. The master-singers appear, and

the apprentices prepare everything needful for them. Walter asks one of them, called David, an apprentice of Sachs, what he will have to do in order to compete for the prize. He has not learnt poetry as a profession like those worthy workmen, and David vainly tries to initiate him into their old-fashioned rhyming. Walter leaves him determined to win the prize after his own fashion.

Pogner appears with Beckmesser the clerk, whom he wishes to have as son-in-law. Beckmesser is so infatuated that he does not doubt of his success. Meanwhile Walter comes up to them, entreating them to admit him into their corporation as a master-singer.

Pogner consents, but Beckmesser grumbles, not at all liking to have a nobleman among them. — When all are assembled, Pogner declares his intention of giving his daughter to the winner of the master-song on the day of St. John's festival, and all applaud his resolution. Eva herself may refuse him, but never is she to wed another than a crowned master-singer. Sachs, who loves Eva as his own child, seeks to change her father's resolution, at the same time proposing to let the people choose in the matter of the prize, but he is silenced by his colleagues. They now want to know where Walter has learnt the art of poetry and song, and as he designates Walter von der Vogelweide and the birds of the forest, they shrug their shoulders.

He begins at once to give a proof of his art, praising Spring in a song thrilling with melody.

Beckmesser interrupts him: he has marked the rhymes on the black tablet, but they are new and unintelligible to this dry verse-maker, and he will not let them pass. The others share his opinion; only Hans Sachs differs from them, remarking that Walter's song, though new and not after the old use and wont rules of Nüremberg, is justified all the same, and so Walter is allowed to finish it, which he does with a bold mockery of the vain poets, comparing them to crows, oversounding a singing-bird Sachs alone feels that Walter is a true poet.

In the second act David the apprentice tells Magdalene, Eva's nurse, that the new singer did not succeed, at which she is honestly grieved, preferring the gallant younker for her mistress, to the old and ridiculous clerk. The old maid loves David; she provides him with food and sweets and many are the railleries which he has to suffer from his companions in consequence.

The evening coming on we see Sachs in his open work-shop; Eva, his darling, is in confidential talk with him. She is anxious about to-morrow, and rather than wed Beckmesser she would marry Sachs, whom she loves and honors as a father. Sachs is a widower, but he rightly sees through her schemes and resolves to help the lovers.

It has now grown quite dark, and Walter comes to see Eva, but they have not sat long together, when the sounds of a lute are heard.

It is Beckmesser trying to serenade Eva, but Sachs interrupts him by singing himself and thus

excites Beckmesser's wrath and despair. At last a window opens, and Beckmesser, taking Magdalene for Eva, adresses her in louder and louder tones, Sachs all the time beating the measure on a shoe. The neighboring windows open, there is a general alarm, and David, seeing Magdalene at the window apparently listening to Beckmesser, steals behind this unfortunate minstrel, and begins to slap him. In the uproar which now follows, Walter vainly tries to escape from his refuge under the lime-tree, but Sachs comes to his rescue, and takes him into his own work-shop, while he pushes Eva unseen into her father's house, the door of which has just been opened by Pogner.

In the third act we find Sachs in his room. Walter enters, thanking him heartily for the night's shelter. Sachs kindly shows him the rules of poetry, encouraging him to try his luck once more. Walter begins and quite charms Sachs with his love-song. After they have left the room, Beckmesser enters, and reading the poetry, which Sachs wrote down, violently charges the shoemaker with wooing Eva himself. Sachs denies it and allows Beckmesser to keep the paper. The latter who has vainly ransacked his brains for a new song, is full of joy, hoping to win the prize with it.

When he is gone, Eva slips in to fetch her shoes, and she sees Walter, stepping out of his sleeping-room in brilliant armor. He has found a third stanza to his song, which he at once produces. — They all proceed to the place where the festival is to be held and Beckmesser is the first

to try his fortunes, which he does by singing the stolen song. He sadly muddles both melody and words, and being laughed at, he charges Sachs with treachery, but Sachs quietly denies the authorship, pushing forward Walter, who now sings his stanzas, inspired by love and poetry. No need to say that he wins the hearer's hearts as he has won those of Eva and Sachs, and that Pogner does not deny him his beloved daughter's hand.

DER MAURER.

(THE MASON.)

Opera in three acts by Auber.

Text by Scribe.

This charming little work is one of the best semi-comic operas ever composed; from the time of its first representation in Paris until now it has never lacked success.

The libretto is founded on a true anecdote, and is admirably suited to the music.

The scene is laid in Paris in the year 1788.

The first act represents the merry wedding of Roger, a mason, with Henrietta, sister of Baptiste, a locksmith. A jealous old hag, Mistress Bertrand, who would fain have married the nice young man is wondering, whence the poor mason has the money for his wedding, when suddenly a young nobleman, Léon de Mérinville, appears, greeting Roger warmly. He relates to the astonished hearers that Roger saved his life, but would not take any reward, nor tell his name. Roger ex-

plains that the nobleman put so much money into his pocket, that it enabled him, to marry his charming Henrietta, but Mérinville is determined to do more for him. Meanwhile Roger tries to withdraw from the ball with his young wife; but Henrietta is called back by her relations according to custom. — Roger, being left alone, is accosted by two unknown men, who, veiling his eyes, force him to follow them to a spot unknown to him, in order to do some mason-work for them. It is to the house of Abdallah, the Turkish ambassador, that he is led. The latter has heard that his mistress Irma, a young Greek maiden, is about to take flight with a French officer, who is no other than de Mérinville.

The lovers are warned by a slave, named Rica, but it is too late; Abdallah's people overtake and bind them. They are brought into a cavern, the entrance to which Roger is ordered to mure up. There, before him, he finds his friend and brother-in-law, Baptiste, who was likewise caught and is now forced to help him.

Recognizing in the officer his benefactor, Roger revives hope in him by singing a song, which Léon heard him sing at the time he saved his life.

Meanwhile Henrietta has passed a dreadful night, not being able to account for her husband's absence. In the morning Mistress Bertrand succeeds in exciting the young wife's sorrow and jealousy to a shocking degree, so that when Roger at last appears, she receives him with a volley of reproaches and questions.

Roger, unhappy about Mérinville's fate and ignorant of where he has been in the night, scarcely listens to his wife's complaints, until Henrietta remarks that she well knows, where he has been, Mistress Bertrand having recognized the carriage of the Turkish ambassador, in which he was wheeled away.

This brings light into Roger's brain and without more ado he rushes to the police, with whose help the poor prisoners are delivered. Roger returns with him to his wife's house, where things are cleared up in the most satisfactory manner.

MERLIN.

Opera in three acts by Charles Goldmark.
Text by Sigfrie Lipiner.

This latest creation of the talented composer at once proved itself a success, when produced for the first time in the Opera-house in Vienna. Since then it has quickly passed to all of the larger stages.

Merlin surpasses the Queen of Sheba in dramatic value and is equal to it in glowing coloring and brilliant orchestration. Goldmark is quite the reverse of Wagner. Though equally master of modern instrumentation, he abounds in melodies. Airs, duets and choruses meet us of surpassing beauty and sweetness. The text is highly fantastic, but interesting and poetical.

King Artus is attacked by the Saxons and almost succumbs. — In his need he sends Lancelot to Merlin, an enchanter and seer, but at the same

time the King's best friend and a Knight of his table.

Merlin, offspring of the Prince of Hell and of a pure virgin, has power over the demons, whom however he only employs in the service of Heaven, his good mother's spirit protecting him. Merlin calls up a demon, whom he forces to blind the heathen Saxons, so that the Britons may be victorious. The demon obeys unwillingly and after Merlin's departure he calls up the fairy Morgana, who knows all the secrets of the world. Morgana tells the demon, that if Merlin loves an earthly woman his power will be gone and the demon resolves to tempt Merlin with the most beautiful woman on earth. He vanishes and the Britons return victorious, Merlin with prophetic insight recognizing the knight, who had betrayed his people to the Saxons. While he sings a passionate chant in honor of his King and his country, Vivien, a Duke's daughter, appears and they are at once attracted to each other. But Merlin vanquishes his love and refuses to accept the crown of oak leaves, which his King offers him by the hand of Vivien. Then Artus takes his own crown and puts it on Merlin's curls.

The second act begins with a conspiracy headed by Modred, Artus' nephew, against his uncle. Lancelot openly accuses him of treason, and the King sends to Merlin, for judgment. But alas, Merlin's love has already blinded his understanding: he fails to detect the culpable Modred, and declares that he is not able to find fault in him. King Artus and

his knights depart, to seek new laurels, leaving the country in Modred's hands. Merlin stays in his sanctum, to where the demon now leads Vivien, who has lost her way. The doors of the temple open by themselves at Vivien's request, and she finds a rosy, glittering veil, which, thrown into the air, causes various charming apparitions to present themselves. — When Merlin comes, the whole charm vanishes into air. Vivien tells him of her delightful adventure, but Merlin, frightened, informs her that who ever is touched by the veil, will be in the power of the demons, chained to a rock for ever. Love conquers, and the short hour succeeding is for both filled with earth's greatest bliss. The news of Modred's treachery to King Artus awakes Merlin from his dream. He tears himself from his love, vowing to shun her for ever and to return to the well of grace. But Vivien, finding all her prayers vain, throws the fatal veil over him to hinder his flight. The dreadful effect becomes instantly apparent; the rose-garden disappears, mighty rocks enclose the vale on all sides, and Merlin is held down by burning chains.

While Vivien is consumed by self-reproach and pain, the fairy Morgana appears, telling her that love, which is stronger than death, can bring Merlin eternal grace. Vivien is led away by her maid, and Lancelot enters with the knights to seek Merlin's help against the treacherous Modred.

Seeing Merlin in this pitiful state, he sadly turns from him, but Merlin in dispair promises his soul to the demon, if he but assist to deliver his

King and his country. The demon breaks the chains and Merlin rushes with the knights into battle. During his absence Vivien prepares herself to receive her hero, but though she sees him return victorious he is wounded to death. The demon comes up to claim his victim, but Vivien, remembering Morgana's words, sacrifices herself piercing her heart at Merlin's feet. The demon disappears cursing heaven and earth, while Artus and his knights, though they sadly mourn for their hero, yet praise the victory of true love.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Comic opera in three acts by Otto Nicolai.

Text by Mosenthal.

This charming opera has achieved the fame of its composer, of whom very little is known, except that he is the author of this really admirable musical composition, which is valued not only in Germany but all over Europe. Its overture is played by almost every orchestra, and the choruses and songs are both delightful and original. As may be gathered from the title the whole amusing story is taken from Shakespeare's comedy.

Falstaff has written love-letters to the wives of two citizens of Windsor, Mrs. Fluth and Mrs. Reich. They discover his duplicity and decide to punish the infatuated old fool.

Meanwhile Mr. Fenton, a nice but poor young man asks for the hand of Miss Anna Reich. But her father has already chosen a richer suitor for his daughter in the person of silly Mr. Spärlich

In the following scene Sir John Falstaff is amiably received by Mrs. Fluth, when suddenly Mrs. Reich arrives, telling them that Mr. Fluth will be with them at once, having received notice of his wife's doings. Falstaff is packed into a washing-basket and carried away from under Mr. Fluth's nose by two men, who are bidden to put the contents in a canal near the Thames, and the jealous husband, finding nobody, receives sundry lectures from his offended wife.

In the second act Mr. Fluth, mistrusting his wife, makes Falstaff's acquaintance, under the assumed name of Bach, and is obliged to hear an account of the worthy Sire's gallant adventure with his wife and its disagreeable issue. Fluth persuades Falstaff to give him a rendezvous, swearing inwardly to punish the old coxcomb for his impudence.

In the evening Miss Anna meets her lover Fenton in the garden, and ridiculing her two suitors, Spärlich and Dr. Caius, a Frenchman, she promises to remain faithful to her love. The two others, who are hidden behind some trees, must perforce listen to their own dispraise.

When the time has come for Falstaff's next visit to Mrs. Fluth, who of course knows of her husband's renewed suspicion, Mr. Fluth surprises his wife and reproaches her violently with her conduct. During this controversy Falstaff is disguised as an old woman and when the neighbors come to help the husband in his search, they find only an old deaf cousin of Mrs. Fluth's who has come

from the country to visit her. Nevertheless the hag gets a good thrashing from the duped and angry husband.

In the last act everybody is in the forest, preparing for the festival of Herne the hunter. All are masked, and Sir John Falstaff, being led on by the two merry wives is surprised by Herne (Fluth) who sends the whole chorus of wasps, flies and mosquitos on to his broad back. They torment and punish him, till he loudly cries for mercy. Fenton in the mask of Oberon has found his Anna in Queen Titania, while Dr. Caius and Spärlich, mistaking their masks for Anna's, sink into each-other's arms, much to their mutual discomfiture.

Mr. Fluth and Mr. Reich, seeing that their wives are innocent and that they only made fun of Falstaff, are quite happy and the whole scene ends with a general pardon.

August 20/90
Vienna.

MIGNON.

Opera in three acts by Ambroise Thomas.
Text by Michel Carré and Jules Barbier.

This opera is full of French grace and vivacity, and has been favorably received in Germany. The authors have used, for their libretto, Goethe's celebrated novel „Wilhelm Meister", with its typical figure Mignon as heroine, though very much altered.

The two first acts are played out in Germany.

Lothario, a half demented old man, poorly clad as a wandering minstrel, seeks his lost daughter Sperata. Mignon comes with a band of gipsies, who abuse her because she refuses to dance.

Lothario advances to protect her, but Jarno, the chief of the troop, only scorns him, until a student, Wilhelm Meister steps forth and rescues her, a young actress named Philine compensating the gipsy for his loss by giving him all her loose cash. Mignon, grateful for the rescue, falls in love with Wilhelm and wants to follow and serve him, but the young man though delighted with her loveliness and humility is not aware of her love. Nevertheless he takes her with him. He is of good family, but by a whim just now stays with a troop of comedians, to whom he takes his protégée. The coquette Philine loves Wilhelm and has completely enthralled him by her arts and graces. She awakes bitter jealousy in Mignon who tries to drown herself, but is hindered by the sweet strains of Lothario's harp which appeal to the nobler feelings of her nature. The latter always keeps near her, watching over the lovely child. He instinctively feels himself attracted towards her; she recalls his lost daughter to him and he sees her as abandoned and lonely as himself. Mignon, hearing how celebrated Philine is, wishes that the palace within which Philine plays, might be struck by lightning, and Lothario at once executes her wish by setting the house on fire.

While the guests rush into the garden, Philine orders Mignon to fetch her nosegay, the same flower, which the thoughtless youth offered to his mistress Philine. Mignon, reproaching herself for her sinful wish, at once flies into the burning house, and only afterwards does her friend Laërtes per-

ceive, that the theatre has caught fire too. Everybody thinks Mignon lost, but Wilhelm rushing into the flames, is happy enough to rescue her. —

The third act carries us to Italy, where the sick Mignon has been brought. Wilhelm, having discovered her love, which she reveals in her delirium, vows to live only for her. Lothario, no longer a minstrel, receives them as the owner of the palace, from which he had been absent since the loss of his daughter. While he shows Mignon the relics of the past, a scarf and a bracelet of corals are suddenly recognized by her. She begins to remember her infantine prayers, she recognizes the hall with the marble statues and her mother's picture on the wall. — With rapture Lothario embraces his long-lost Sperata. But Mignon's jealous love has found out that Philine followed her, and she knows no peace until Wilhelm has proved to her satisfaction that he loves her best.

At last Philine graciously renounces Wilhelm and turns to Friedrich, one of her many adorers, whom to his own great surprise she designates as her future husband. Mignon at last openly avows her passion for Wilhelm. The people, hearing of the arrival of their master, the Marquis of Cypriani, alias Lothario, come to greet him with loud acclamations of joy, which grow still louder, when he presents to them his long-lost daughter Sperata and Wilhelm, her chosen husband.

LA MUETTE DE PORTICI.

Grand historical opera in five acts by Auber.

Text by Scribe.

This opera was first put on the stage in the Grand Opera-House at Paris in the year 1828, and achieved for its author universal celebrity; not only, because in it Auber rises to heights, which he never reached either before or after, but because it is purely historical. The „Muette" is like a picture, which attracts by its vivid reproduction of nature. In the local tone, the southern temper, Auber has succeeded in masterly fashion, and the text forms an admirable background to the music. Its subject is the revolution of Naples in the year 1647 and the rise and fall of Masaniello, the fisherman-King.

In the first act we witness the wedding of Alfonso, son of the Viceroy of Naples, with the Spanish Princess Elvira. Alfonso, who has seduced Fenella, the Neapolitan Masaniello's dumb sister and abandoned her, is tormented by doubts and remorse, fearing that she has committed suicide. During the festival Fenella rushes in to seek protection from the Viceroy, who has kept her prisoner for the past month. She has escaped from her prison and narrates the story of her seduction by gestures, showing a scarf which her lover gave her. Elvira promises to protect her and proceeds to the altar, Fenella vainly trying to follow her. In the chapel Fenella recognizes her seducer in the bridegroom of the Princess. When the newly married

couple come out of the church, Elvira presents Fenella to her husband and discovers from the dumb girl's gestures, that he was her faithless lover. Fenella flies, leaving Alfonso and Elvira in sorrow and despair.

In the second act the fishermen, who have been brooding in silence over the tyranny of their foes, begin to assemble. Pietro, Masaniello's friend, has sought for Fenella in vain, but at length she appears of her own accord and confesses her wrongs. Masaniello is infuriated and swears to have revenge, but Fenella, who still loves Alfonso, does not mention his name. Then Masaniello calls the fishermen to arms and they swear perdition to the enemy of their country.

In the third act we find ourselves in the market-place in Naples, where the people go to and fro, selling and buying, all the while concealing their purpose under a show of merriment and carelessness. Selva, the officer of the Viceroy's body-guard, from whom Fenella has escaped, discovers her and the attempt to rearrest her is the sign for a general revolt, in which the people are victorious.

In the fourth act Fenella comes to her brother's dwelling and describes the horrors, which are taking place in the town. The relation fills his noble soul with sorrow and disgust. When Fenella has retired to rest, Pietro enters with comrades and tries to excite Masaniello to further deeds, but he only wants liberty and shrinks from murder and cruelties.

They tell him that Alfonso has escaped and

a resolution is come to overtake and kill him. Fenella, who hears all, decides to save her lover. At this moment Alfonso begs at her door for a hiding-place. He enters with Elvira, and Fenella, though at first disposed to avenge herself on her rival, pardons her for Alfonso's sake. Masaniello, reentering, assures the strangers of his protection and even when Pietro denounces Alfonso as the Viceroy's son, he holds his promise sacred. Pietro with his fellow-conspirators leaves him full of rage and hatred.

Meanwhile the magistrate of the city presents Masaniello with the royal crown and he is proclaimed King of Naples.

In the fifth act we find Pietro with the other fishermen before the Viceroy's palace. He confides to Moreno, that he has administered poison to Masaniello, in order to punish him for his treason, and that the King of one day will soon die. While he speaks, Borella rushes in to tell of a fresh troop of soldiers, marching against the people with Alfonso at their head. Knowing that Masaniello alone can save them, the fishermen entreat him to take the command of them once more, and Masaniello, though deadly ill and half bereft of his reason, complies with their request. The combat takes place, while an eruption of Vesuvius is going on. Masaniello falls in the act of saving Elvira's life. On hearing these terrible tidings Fenella rushes to the terrace, from which she leaps into the abyss beneath, while the fugitive noblemen take again possession of the town.

NACHTLAGER VON GRANADA.

(A NIGHT'S REST AT GRANADA.)

Romantic opera in two acts by Conradin Kreutzer.

Text taken from Kind's drama of the same name by Freiherr K. von Bronn.

This little opera, which literally overflows with charming songs and true German melody, has never passed the bounds of the country which gave it birth, for notwithstanding its beauties, which endear it to the German people, it lacks dramatic life and action. But in Germany its melodies have penetrated into the hearts of the people, and will never be taken thence.

The tale is very simple and treats of Spanish life in the middle of the 16th century.

The Crown-prince of Spain has strayed from his train, and, disguised as a simple hunter, has found some shepherds, who grant him a night's rest in an old castle. He excites their jealousy however by kissing the pretty shepherdess Gabriela, and they resolve to kill and rob him. Gabriela has two suitors, the kind shepherd Gomez, whom she loves, and Vasco, a wild youngster, who calls her his bride against her wish and will. In her distress she turns to the hunter, who promises to apply to the Crown-prince on her and her lover's behalf.

Gabriela, hearing of the plot against the hunter, becomes his guardian-angel, for just as the Prince is about to succumb to the ruffians, she brings on his followers, who have been found out by her lover Gomez. The robbers are punished, and Ga-

briela, being allowed to ask for a boon, begs to be united to Gomez. The Crown-Prince himself joins their hands, granting them rich presents, and takes leave of the peasants amid loud acclamations and benedictions. A pretty little opera.

NORMA.

Tragic opera in two acts by Bellini.

Text by Romani.

Few operas can boast of as good and effective a libretto as that, which Romani wrote for Bellini's Norma. He took his subject from a French tragedy and wrote in beautiful Italian verse.

With this work Bellini won his fame and crowned his successes. Again it is richness of melody in which Bellini excels; highly finished dramatic art and lofty style he does not possess, and it is this very richness of melody, which make him and specially his Norma such a favorite in all theatres. His music is also particularly well suited to the human voice, and Norma was always one of the most brilliant parts of our first dramatic singers.

The contents are as follows:

Norma, daughter of Orovist, chief of the Druids and High-priestess herself, has broken her vows and secretly married Pollio, the Roman Proconsul. They have two children. But Pollio's love has vanished. In the first act he confides to his companion Flavius, that he is enamoured of Adalgisa, a young priestess in the temple of Irminsul, the Druids' god.

Norma, whose secret nobody knows but her friend Clothilde, is worshipped by the people, being the only one able to interpret the oracles of their god. She prophesies Rome's fall, which she declares will be brought about, not by the prowess of Gallic warriors, but by its own weakness. She sends away the people to invoke the benediction of the god alone. When she also is gone, Adalgisa appears and is persuaded by Pollio to fly with him to Rome. But remorse and fear induce her to confess her sinful love to Norma, whom she like the others adores. Norma however, seeing the resemblance to her own fate, promises to release her from her vows and give her back to the world and to happiness, but hearing from Adalgisa the name of her lover, who, as it happens, just then approaches, she of course reviles the traitor, telling the poor young maiden, that Pollio is her own spouse. The latter defies her, but she drives him away. Though as he goes he bids Adalgisa follow him, the young priestess turns from the faithless lover, and craves Norma's pardon for the offence she has unwittingly been guilty of.

In the second act Norma, full of despair at Pollio's treason, resolves to kill her sleeping boys. But they awake and the mother's heart shudders as she thinks of her purpose; then she calls for Clothilde, and bids her fetch Adalgisa.

When she appears, Norma entreats her to be a mother to her children, and to take them to their father Pollio, because she has determined to free herself from shame and sorrow by a voluntary

death. But the noble-hearted Adalgisa will not hear of this sacrifice and promises to bring Pollio back to his first love. After a touching duet, in which they swear eternal friendship to each other, Norma takes courage again. Her hopes are vain however, for Clothilde enters to tell her that Adalgisa's prayers were of no avail. — Norma distrusting her rival, calls her people to arm against the Romans and gives orders to prepare the funeral pile for the sacrifice. The victim is to be Pollio, who was captured in the act of carrying Adalgisa off by force. Norma orders her father and the Gauls away, that she may speak alone with Pollio, to whom she promises safety, if he will renounce Adalgisa and return to her and to her children. But Pollio, whose only thought is of Adalgisa, pleads for her and for his own death. Norma, denying it to him, calls the priests of the temple, to denounce as victim a priestess, who, forgetting her sacred vows, has entertained a sinful passion in her bosom and betrayed the gods. Then she firmly tells them that she herself is this faithless creature, but to her father alone does she reveal the existence of her children.

Pollio, recognizing the greatness of her character, which impels her to sacrifice her own life in order to save him and her rival, feels his love for Norma revive and stepping forth from the crowd of spectators he takes his place beside her on the funeral pile. Both commend their children to Norma's father Orovist, who finally pardons the poor victims.

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO.

Comic opera in four acts by **Mozart.**

Text by **Lorenzo da Ponte.**

This opera may be said to be the continuation of Rossini's „Barbiere di Seviglia." The text too is taken from Beaumarchais' Figaroade, and the principal persons in it, we find to be old acquaintances. It is the same Count Almaviva, now married to Rosina; Figaro, the cunning barber, has entered the Count's service and is about to marry Rosina's maid, Susanna. We meet among the others old Doctor Bartolo and Basilio. Even in the management of the subject, and in the music we find some resemblance. „Figaro's wedding" has the same character of gaiety; no storms, very few clouds; there prevails throughout an atmosphere of sunshine and brightness. After Don Juan, Figaro was Mozart's darling, and it shines radiantly in the crown of his fame. There is no triviality in it, as we find in most of the comic operas of Offenbach and others; it is always noble as well as characteristic in every part.

The text may be paraphrased thus:

Count Almaviva, though married to Rosina and loving her ardently, cannot bring himself to cease playing the role of a gallant cavalier; he likes pretty women where-ever he finds them, and notwithstanding his high moral principles, is carrying on a flirtation with Rosina's maid, the charming Susanna. This does not hinder him from being jealous of his wife, who is here represented as a character both sweet and passive. He suspects

her of being overfond of her Page, Cherubino. — From the by-standers, Doctor Bartolo and Marcellina, we hear, that their old hearts have not yet ceased to glow at the touch of youth and love; Bartolo would fain give his affections to Susanna, while Marcellina pretends to have claims on Figaro.

These are the materials which are so dexterously woven into the complicated plot and which furnish to many funny qui-pro-quos.

In the second act we find Cherubino the Page in the rooms of the Countess, who, innocent and pure herself, sees in him only a child; but this youth has a passionate heart and he loves his mistress ardently. Mistress and maid have amused themselves with Cherubino, putting him into women's dresses. The Count, rendered suspicious by a letter, given to him by Basilio, bids his wife open her door. The women, afraid of his jealousy, detain him a while, and only open the door, when Cherubino has got safely through the window and away over the flower-beds. The Count, entering, full of wrath, finds only Susanna with his wife. Ashamed of his suspicions, he asks her pardon and swears never to be jealous again. All blame in the matter of the letter is put on Figaro's shoulders but this cunning fellow lies boldly, and the Count cannot get the clue to the mystery. Figaro and Susanna, profiting by the occasion, entreat the Count at last to consent to their wedding, which he has always put off. At this moment the gardener Antonio enters, complaining of the spoilt flower-beds. Figaro,

taking all upon himself, owns that he sprang out of the window, having had an interview with Susanna and fearing the Count's anger. All deem themselves saved, when Antonio presents a document, which the fugitive has lost. The Count, not quite convinced, asks Figaro to tell him the contents; but the latter, never at a loss and discovering that it is the Page's patent, says, that the document was given to him by the Page, the seal having been forgotten. The Count is about to let him off, when Bartolo appears with Marcellina, who claims a matrimonial engagement with Figaro. Her claim is favored by the Count, who wishes to see Susanna unmarried. Out of this strait however they are delivered by finding that Figaro is the son of the old couple, the child of their early love; and all again promises well. But the Countess and Susanna have prepared a little punishment for the jealous husband as well as for the flighty lover.

They have both written letters, in which they ask the men to an interview in the garden. Susanna's letter goes to the Count, Rosina's to Figaro. Under the wings of night the two women meet, each, her own lover, but Susanna wears the Countess' dress, while Rosina has arrayed herself in Susanna's clothes. —

The Countess, not usually given to such tricks, is very anxious. While she awaits her husband, Cherubino approaches, and taking her for Susanna, he, like a little Don Juan as he is, makes love to her. Hearing the Count's steps, he disappears.

Almaviva caresses the seeming Susanna, telling her nice things and giving her a ring, which she accepts. They are observed by the other couple and the sly Figaro, who has recognized Susanna, notwithstanding her disguise, denounces the Count to her, vows eternal love and generally makes his bride burn with wrath. In her anger she boxes his ears, upon which he confesses to having known her from the first, and at once restores her good humour.

Seeing the Count approach, they continue to play their former roles, and the false Countess makes love to Figaro, till the Count accosts her as „traitress." For a while she lets him suffer all the tortures of jealousy, then the lights appear and the Count stands ashamed before his lovely wife, recognizing his mistake. The gentle Countess forgives him, and the repenting husband swears eternal fidelity. He speedily unites the lovers Figaro and Susanna and forgives even the little Page Cherubino.

OBERON.

Romantic opera in three acts by Weber.

English text by Planché, translated by Th. Hell.

Oberon is Weber's last work. In the year 1824 he had the honor of being commissioned to compose this opera for the Covent-garden theatre. He began at once to study English, but, his health giving way, he progressed slowly. Notwithstanding his illness however, he worked on and finished the opera in the year 1826. He had the happiness

of seeing it crowned with success, when he travelled to London in February of that year, but he could not witness its triumphs in Germany, for he died in the following July.

The text is most fantastic without any strict order of succession either in the matter of time or locality. It is taken from Wieland's fairy-tale of the same name.

In the first act we find Oberon, the Elfin-king, in deep melancholy, which no gaiety of his subjects, however charming, avails to remove. He has quarelled with his wife Titania, and both have vowed never to be reconciled, until they find a pair of lovers, faithful to each other in all kinds of adversity. Both long for the reunion, but the constant lovers are not to be found.

Oberon's most devoted servant is little Puck, who has vainly roved over the world to find what his master needs. He has however heard of a valiant knight in Burgundy, Hüon, who has killed Carloman, the son of Charlemagne in a duel, having been insulted by him. Charlemagne, not willing to take his life for a deed of defence, orders him to go to Bagdad, to slay the favorite, sitting to the left of the Calif, and to wed the Calif's daughter Rezia. Puck resolves to make this pair suit his ends. He tells Oberon the above-mentioned story, and by means of his lily-scepter shows Hüon and Rezia to him. At the same time these two behold each other in a vision, so that, when they awake both are deeply in love.

Oberon wakes Hüon and his faithful shield-

bearer Scherasmin, and promises his help in every time of need. He presents Hüon with a magic horn, which will summon him at any time; Scherasmin receives a cup, which fills with wine of itself. Then he immediately transports them to Bagdad.

There we find Rezia with her Arabian maid, Fatima. The Calif's daughter is to wed Babekan, a Persian Prince, but she has hated him ever since she saw Hüon in her vision. Fatima has discovered the arrival of Hüon. It is high time, for in the beginning of the second act we see the Calif with Babekan, who wants to celebrate the nuptials at once. Rezia enters, but at the same time Hüon advances, recognizing in Rezia the fair one of his dream. He fights, and stabs Babekan. The Turks attack him, but Scherasmin blows his magic horn and compells them to dance and laugh, until the fugitives have escaped.

In the forest they are overtaken, but Hüon and Scherasmin, who has come after his master with Fatima, put the pursuers to flight.

Oberon now appears to the lovers, and makes them promise upon oath that they will remain faithful to each-other under every temptation. He immediately after transports them to the port of Ascalon, from which they are to sail homeward. Oberon now puts their constancy to the proof. Puck conjures up the nymphs and the spirits of the air, who raise an awful tempest. Hüon's ship sinks: the lovers are shipwrecked. While Hüon seeks for help, Rezia is captured by the pirates, and Hüon, returning to save her, is wounded and left senseless

on the beach. Oberon now causes him to fall into a magic sleep, which is to last seven days.

In the third act we find Scherasmin and his bride, Fatima, in Tunis dressed as poor gardeners. A corsair has saved the shipwrecked and sold them as slaves to the Emir of Tunis. Though poor and in captivity they do not lose courage and are happy that they are permitted to bear their hard lot together.

Meanwhile the seven days of Hüon's sleep have passed. Awaking, he finds himself to his astonishment in Tunis, in the Emir's garden, with his servant beside him, who is not less astonished at finding his master.

Fatima, coming back, relates that she has discovered Rezia in the Emir's harem. Hüon, who finds a nosegay with a message, which bids him come to the myrtle-bower during the night, believes that it comes from Rezia and is full of joy at the idea of meeting his bride. Great is his terror, when the lady puts aside her veil, and he sees Roschana, he Emir's wife. She has fallen in love with the noble knight, whom she saw in the garden, but all her desires are in vain; he loathes her and is about to escape, when the Emir enters, captures and sentences him to be consumed by fire. Roschana is to be drowned. Rezia, hearing of her lover's fate, implores the Emir to pardon him. But she has already offended him by her unwillingness to listen to his protestations of love, and when he hears that Hüon is her husband, he condemns them to be burnt together. Their trials however are

nearing their end. Scherasmin has regained his long-lost horn, by means of which he casts a spell on everybody, until, blowing it with all his might, he calls Oberon to their aid. The Elfin-King appears accompanied by Queen Titania, who is now happily reconciled to him and thanking the lovers for their constancy, he brings them safely back to Paris, where Charlemagne holds his court. The Emperor's wrath is now gone and he warmly welcomes Sir Hüon with his lovely bride, promising them honor and glory for their future days.

ORFEO E EURIDICE.

Opera in three acts by Gluck.

Text by Ranièro di Calzabigi.

This opera is the oldest of all we possess in our repertoire. Gluck had already written more than forty operas, of which we do not even know the names now, when he composed his Orfeo, breaking with the old Italian traditions and showing a new and more natural taste. All the charm of Italian melody is still to be found in this composition, but it is blent with real feeling, united to great strength of expression and its value is enhanced by a total absence of all those superfluous warbles and artificial ornaments, which filled the Italian operas of that time. The libretto, taken from the old and beautiful Greek tragedy, is as effective as the music.

Orpheus, the celebrated Greek musician and singer has lost his wife Eurydice. His mournful songs fill the groves where he laments, and with

them he touches the hearts not only of his friends but of the gods. On his wife's grave Amor appears to him, and bids him descend into Hades, where he is to move the Furies and the Elysian shadows with his sweet melodies, and win back from them his lost wife.

He is to recover her on one condition, which is, that he never casts a look on her on their return to earth, for if he fail in this, Eurydice will be for ever lost to him.

Taking his lyre and casque Orpheus promises obedience and with renewed hope sallies forth on his mission. The second act represents the gates of Erebus, from which flames arise. Orpheus is surrounded by furies and demons, who try to frighten him; but he, nothing daunted, mollifies them by his sweet strains, and they set free the passage to Elysium, where Orpheus has to win the happy shadows. He beholds Eurydice among them, veiled; the happy shadows readily surrender her to him, escorting the pair to the gates of their happy vale.

The third act beholds the spouses on their way back to earth. Orpheus holds Eurydice by the hand, drawing the reluctant wife on, but without raising his eyes to her face, on and on through the winding and obscure paths, which lead out of the infernal regions. Notwithstanding his protestations of love and his urgent demands to her to follow him, Eurydice never ceases to implore him to cast a single look on her, threatening him with her death, should he not fulfil her wish. Orpheus, forbidden to tell her the reason of his strange be-

haviour, long remains deaf to her cruel complaints, but at last he yields, and looks back, only to see her expire under his gaze. Overwhelmed by grief and despair Orpheus draws his sword to destroy himself, when Amor appears, and stays the fatal stroke.

In pity for Orpheus' love and constancy he reanimates Eurydice (contrary however to the letter of the Greek tragedy) and the act closes with a beautiful chorus sung in Amor's praise.

OTHELLO.

Opera in four acts by Giuseppe Verdi.

Text by Arrigo Boito,
translated into the German by Max Kalbeck.

In his seventy-third year the Maëstro has given to his time an opera, which surpasses his former compositions in many respects. It proves, that Verdi's genius has remained admirably fresh and that the new views and revelations, which Wagner opened to the musical world have been fully understood by the Italian. He has now broken with the unnatural traditions of the Italian opera, and has in Othello given us a work, which secures to him an honored place amongst the best dramatic composers.

It must not be omitted, that Verdi had a splendid second in the person of Boïto, the high-minded and capable composer of „Mefistofele". He omits in his action all that is incidental, and as a consequence the force of thought and expression

is the more powerful. It is written strictly after Shakespeare's original.

The opera was put on the stage in Munich in the summer of 1888 with great success.

The first scene represents the people, following excitedly the course of Othello's ship, which battles with the waves. After he has landed and informed the assembly of his victory over the Turks, shouts of joy and exultation rend the air.

Then follows a convivial chat between Cassio, Rodrigo and Jago, in the course of which the latter makes Cassio drunk. Jago's demoniacal nature is masterfully depicted here where he soon succeeds in ruining Cassio, who loses his rank as captain.

In the third scene we see Desdemona with her husband, both rejoicing in the felicity of their mutual love.

In the second act Jago proceeds to carry out his evil intents, by sending Cassio to Desdemona, who is to intercede for him with Othello. Jago then calls Othello's attention to the retiring Cassio and by making vile insinuations inflames his deadly jealousy. Desdemona appears, surrounded by women and children, who offer her flowers and presents. She comes forward to plead for Cassio, and Othello suspiciously refuses. — She takes out her handkerchief to cool her husband's aching forehead with it, but he throws it down and Emilia, Jago's wife, picks it up. Jago wrenches it from her and hides it.

In the next scene Jago's villainous insinuations work upon Othello, who becomes wildly suspicious.

Jago relates a dream of Cassio's, in which he reveals his love for Desdemona, then he hints that he has seen Othello's first love-taken, her lace-handkerchief in Cassio's hands, and both swear to avenge Desdemona's infidelity.

In the third act Othello pretending to have a head-ache, asks for Desdemona's lace-handkerchief. She has lost it, she tells him, but he is incredulous and charges her with infidelity. All her protests are useless, and at length he forces her to retire. Meanwhile Jago has brought Cassio and urges Othello to hide himself. Cassio has a lady-love named Bianca, and of her they speak, but Jago dexterously turns the dialogue so as to make Othello believe that they are speaking of his wife. His jealousy reaches its climax, when Cassio draws forth Desdemona's handkerchief, which Jago has deposited in Cassio's house. All his doubts now seem to be confirmed. A canon-shot announcing the arrival of a galley interrupts the conversation and Cassio quickly leaves.

In the following scene Jago advises Othello to strangle his wife. Othello consents and gives Jago a captaincy.

Lodovico, an Ambassador of Venice, arrives with other nobles to greet their liberator Othello. Desdemona once more asks pardon for Cassio, but is roughly rebuked by her husband. The latter reads the order, which has been brought to him, and tells Cassio, that he is to be General in his stead by will of the Doge of Venise, but while Cassio is confounded by this sudden change of

fortune, Jago secretly vows his death, instigating his rival Rodrigo to kill him. At last Othello faints, overcome by conflicting emotions.

In the fourth act Desdemona filled with sad forebodings takes a touching farewell of Emilia. When she has ended her fervent prayer (one of the most beautiful things in the opera), she falls into a peaceful slumber. Othello awakes her with a kiss, and tells her immediately thereafter that she must die. She protests her innocence, but in vain, for Othello telling her that Cassio can speak no more, strangles her. Hardly has he completed his ghastly work than Emilia comes up, announcing that Rodrigo has been killed by Cassio. Desdemona with her dying breath once more asserts her innocence, while Emilia loudly screams for help. When the others appear, Emilia discovers her husband's villany. Jago flies, and Othello stabs himself at the feet of his innocent spouse.

PARSIFAL.

A festival drama by Richard Wagner.

Though Parsifal is never to be given on any stage except in Baireuth (by Wagner's express wish), it must find its place here, by dint of being the master's last and most perfect composition.

In Parsifal the heavenly greatness of the Christian idea of God, which is at the foundation of the legend of the holy Grail, finds grand expression. There scarcely exists another composition of such lofty and religious spirit, as finds expression in the Communion-scene. It is not possible to ima-

gine a more vivid contrast than that between the saintly melodies and those of the fascinating fairies, which latter glowing with poetry and ravishing music captivate all senses.

The contents are those of the ancient German legend. The first scene is laid in a forest on the grounds of the keepers of the Grail near Castle Monsalvat. Old Gurnemanz awakes two young Squires for their morning prayer, and bids two Knights prepare a bath for the sick King Amfortas, who suffers cruelly from a wound, dealt him by the sorcerer Klingsor, the deadly foe of the holy Grail. The Grail is a sacred cup, from which Christ drank at the last Passover and which also received his holy blood. Titurel, Amfortas' father has built the castle to shield it, and appointed holy men for its service. While Gurnemanz speaks with the Knights about their poor master's sufferings, in rushes Kundry, a sorceress in Klingsor's service, condemned to laugh eternally as a punishment for having derided Christ, while he was suffering on the cross. She it was who with her beauty seduced Amfortas, and deprived him of his holy strength, so that Klingsor was enabled to wring from the King his holy spear Longinus, with which he afterwards wounded him. Kundry is in the garb of a servant of the Grail; she brings balm for the King, who is carried on to the stage in a litter, but it avails him not: „a guileless fool" with a child's pure heart, who will bring back the holy spear and touch him with it, can alone heal his wound.

Suddenly a dying swan sinks to the ground,

and Parsifal, a young knight, appears. Gurnemanz reproaches him severely for having shot the bird, but he appears to be quite ignorant of the fact that it was wrong, and, when questioned, proves to know nothing about his own origin. He only knows his mother's name, „Herzeleide", (heart's affliction), and Kundry, who recognizes him, relates, that his father Gamuret perished in battle and that his mother reared him, a guileless fool, in the desert. When Kundry mentions that his mother is dead, and has sent her last blessing to her son, Parsifal is almost stunned by this his first grief. Gurnemanz conducts him to the castle, where the Knights of the Grail are assembled in a lofty hall. Amfortas is laid on a raised couch, and from behind, Titurel's voice is heard, imploring his son to efface his guilt in godly works. Amfortas, writhing with pain, is comforted by the prophesy:

„By pity lightened, the guileless fool" —
„Wait for him, — my chosen tool."

The Grail is uncovered, the blessing given, and the repast of love begins. Amfortas' hopes revive, but towards the end his wound bursts out afresh. Parsifal, on hearing Amfortas' cry of agony clutches at his heart, without however understanding his own feelings.

The second act reveals Klingsor's magic castle. Kundry, not as a demon now, but as a woman of imperious beauty, is awakened by Klingsor to seduce Parsifal. She yearns for pardon, for sleep and death, but she struggles in vain against the fiendish Klingsor.

The tower gradually sinks; a beautiful garden rises, into which Parsifal gazes with rapture and astonishment. Lovely maidens rush towards him, accusing him of having destroyed their lovers. Parsifal surprised answers, that he slew them, because they checked his approach to their charms. But when their tenderness waxes hotter, he gently repulses the damsels and at last tries to escape. He is detained however by Kundry, wo tells him again of his beloved mother, and when Parsifal is sorrow-stricken at having forgotten her in his thoughtless rambles, she consoles him, pressing his lips with a fervent kiss. This rouses the dreamy youth, he awakes to his duty, he feels the King's spear-wound burning; the unconscious fool is a fool no longer, but conscious of his mission and distinguishing right from wrong. He calls to the Saviour to save him from a guilty passion, and at last he starts up, spurning Kundry. She tells him of her own crime, of Amfortas' fall and curses all paths and ways, which would lead him from her. Klingsor, appearing at her cry, flings the holy spear at Parsifal, but it remains floating over his head, and the youth, grasping it, destroys the magic by the sign of the cross.

In the third act Gurnemanz awakes Kundry from a death-like sleep, and is astonished to find her changed. She is penitent and serves the Grail. Parsifal enters from the woods. Gurnemanz recognizes and greets him, after his wanderings in search of the Grail which have extended over long years. Kundry washes his feet and dries them

with her own hair. Parsifal, seeing her so humble, baptizes her with some water from the spring, and the dreadful laugh is taken from her; then she weeps bitterly. Parsifal, conducted to the King, touches his side with the holy spear, and the wound is closed. Old Titurel, brought on the stage in his coffin, revives once more for a moment, raising his hands in benediction. The Grail is revealed, pouring a halo of glory over all. Kundry, which her eyes fixed on Parsifal, sinks dead to the ground, while Amfortas and Gurnemanz render homage to their new King.

PHILÉMON AND BAUCIS.

Opera in two acts by Charles Gounod.

Text by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré with an intermezzo.

This is a truly delightful musical composition and though unpretending and not on the level of Gounod's „Margaretha", it does not deserve to be forgotten.

The libretto is founded on the well-known legend.

In the first act Jupiter comes to Philémon's hut, accompanied by Vulcan to seek refuge from a storm, which the god himself has caused. He has come to earth to verify Mercury's tale of the people's badness, and finding the news only too true, besides being uncourteously received by the people around, he is glad to meet with a kindly welcome at Philémon's door.

This worthy old man lives in poverty, but in perfect content with his wife Baucis, to whom he

has been united in bonds of love for sixty long years. Jupiter, seeing at once, that the old couple form an exception to the evil rule, resolves to spare them, and to punish only the bad folks. The gods partake of the kind people's simple meal, and Jupiter, changing the milk into wine, is recognized by Baucis, who is much awed by the discovery. But Jupiter reassures her and promises to grant her her one wish, which is, to be young again with her husband, and to live the same life. The god sends them to sleep, and then begins the intermezzo:

Phrygians are seen reposing after a festival, bacchants rush in and the wild orgies begin afresh. The divine is mocked and pleasure praised as the only god. Vulcan appears, sent by Jupiter to warn them, but as they only laugh at him, mocking Olympus and the gods, Jupiter himself appears to punish the sinners. An awful tempest arises, sending everything to rack and ruin. —

In the second act Philémon's hut is changed into a palace; he awakes to find himself and his wife young again. Jupiter, seeing Baucis' beauty, orders Vulcan to keep Philemon apart, while he courts her. Baucis, though determined to remain faithful to her Philémon, feels nevertheless flattered at the god's condescension, and dares not refuse him a kiss. Philémon, appearing on the threshold sees it, and violently reproaches her and his guest, and though Baucis suggests who the latter is, the husband does not feel in the least inclined to share his wife's love even with a god. The first quarrel

takes place between the couple, and Vulcan hearing it, consoles himself with the reflection that he is not the only one, to whom a fickle wife causes sorrow. Philémon bitterly curses Jupiter's gift; he wishes his wrinkles back, and with them his peace of mind. Throwing down Jupiter's statue, he leaves his wife to the god. Baucis, replacing the image, which happily is made of bronze, sorely repents her behaviour towards her beloved husband. Jupiter finds her weeping, and praying that the gods may turn their wrath upon herself alone. The god promises to pardon both, if she is willing to listen to his love. She agrees to the bargain on the condition namely, that Jupiter shall grant her a favor. He consents, and she entreats him to make her old again. Philémon, listening behind the door, rushes forward to embrace the true wife and joins his entreaties to hers. Jupiter, seeing himself caught, would fain be angry, but their love conquers his wrath. He does not recall his gift, but giving them his benediction, he promises never more to cross their happiness.

THE THREE PINTOS.

Comic opera in three acts by C. M. v. Weber.

After Weber's manuscripts and designs, and Th. Hells' textbook. The musical part completed by Gustav Mahler, the dramatic part by Carl von Weber.

Thanks to the incessant endeavours of Weber's grandson and of Gustav Mahler, the gifted disciple of Weber, a real treasure in German music has been disinterred from the fragments of the past,

thus long after its composer's death. It is a striking illustration of the universality of Weber's genius that aught like this should prove to have been written by him, for his manuscript is a fragment of a comic opera of the best kind. Although only seven parts were completed by the composer himself, Mahler took the remaining ten mostly from Weber's other manuscripts. He completed them himself so adroitly, that the best musicians cannot distinguish Weber from Mahler. We owe a debt of gratitude to both composer and poet, who have performed this act of piety towards the great deceased and at the same time have preserved us real musical pearls. The text is well done, though not important enough for three acts; two would have been quite sufficient.

The first scene takes us into a little village in Spain, where a student, Don Gaston Piratos bids farewell to his fellows. He is a gay and gallant youth, whose money dwindles to a paltry sum before mine host's long account. But this cunning host has a charming daughter Ines, and light-hearted Gaston flirts with the damsel, his servant Ambrosio valiantly assisting him.

The Kater-romance sung by Ines is as graceful as it is droll and effective.

Don Pinto de Fonseca now arrives on horseback. He is so corpulent, that he is scarcely able to dismount, and he excites the curiosity and amusement of all. Having called for food and drink he tells Gaston, that he comes to marry a rich and noble lady, Donna Clarissa de Pacheco.

Fonseca's father has once rendered a great service to Don Pantaleone Roiz de Pacheco, and in reward he destined his only child Clarissa for Fonseca's son. This promising young knight has a letter of recommendation from his father. He is in perplexity as to his behaviour towards such a young lady and Gaston offers to instruct him therein. Ambrosio acts as bride, Gaston shows how she is to be courted and Don Pinto gawkishly imitates his teacher's gestures. This scene is most irresistibly comic. When wine and food are brought by Ines and her servants, Don Pinto so entirely absorbs himself in satisfying his hunger and thirst, that at last the wine gets the better of him. He falls asleep and Gaston, thinking it an injury to a noble lady to be wooed by such a clown, takes away old Fonseca's letter and departs with Ambrosio. Don Pinto is carried into the house on a grass-covered litter.

In the second act Don Pantaleone's servants are assembled in the ancestral hall, where their master announces to them the approaching arrival of Don Pinto, his daughter's future bridegroom. Donna Clarissa, who already loves Don Gomez Freiros, a knight of wealth, noble birth and bearing, is in despair, as is also her lover, but Laura, her pretty maid promises to find ways and means to avert the dreaded marriage.

In the third act Laura and the servants are decorating the hall with flowers. The majordomo sends them away, proclaiming Don Pinto's arrival. All go except Laura, who hides behind a bosquet.

Gaston, entering with Ambrosio sees all those preparations with wonder. Ambrosio detects Laura and according to his want begins to court her. Gaston warns the damsel, and she entering into the joke mockingly quits them. Gay Ambrosio is consoling himself in a charming song of which the burden is girls' fickleness, when Don Gomez enters and touches Gaston's kind heart by the description of his love for Clarissa. Gaston tenders him Fonseca's letter, counselling Gomez to play the part of Don Pinto, for Don Pantaleone has never seen either of them. Gomez accepts the letter gratefully from the supposed Don Pinto and presents it to Don Pantaleone, who has entered with his daughter and his whole suite. Of course the father, struck by the Knight's noble bearing, gives his consent to the union with his daughter and adds his benediction. But their joy is disturbed by the entrance of the real Don Pinto, who at once begins wooing in the manner he has practised with Don Gaston.

The ridiculous fellow is thought mad and is about to be turned out, when catching sight of Gaston, he loudly accuses him of treachery. Gaston however draws his sword and menaces Don Pinto, upon which the poor swain cries for mercy and is thereafter removed from the hall amidst the laughter of the whole chorus.

Imagine the assistant's astonishment, when Gaston declares, that they have turned out the true Don Pinto. Gomez believing himself betrayed challenges Gaston, and the father rages against

the two pretenders. But Clarissa pleads and Gaston quietly shows to Don Pantaleone the contrast between the two suitors, while Gomez is obliged to acknowledge gratefully that he owes his lovely bride solely to Don Gaston's joke. So the lovers are united.

THE POACHER

or

„THE VOICE OF NATURE"

by Lortzing.

Text after a comedy by Kotzebue.

The music to this opera is so fresh, so full of gaiety and of charming melodies, that it might be compared with Lortzing's „Czar and Zimmermann", if only the text were as well done. Unhappily it lacks all the advantages which characterise the opera just named, as it is frivolous, without possessing the grace and „esprit", which distinguish French composition of a similar kind.

Nevertheless the good music prevails over the bad text, and the opera holds it own with success in every German theatre.

The contents of the libretto are the following:

A schoolmaster, Baculus by name, has had the misfortune unintentionally to shoot a roe-buck, belonging to the forest of his master, Count of Eberbach. Baculus, who is on the eve of his wedding with a young girl, named Gretchen, is much afraid, when the consequences of his unlucky shot show themselves in the shape of a summons to the castle, where he is looked on as a poacher, and is in danger of losing his position. His bride offers to

entreat the Count to pardon him, but the jealous old schoolmaster will not allow it. In this embarrassing position the Baroness Freimann, a young widow, appears disguised in the suit of a student, and accompanied by her chambermaid Nanette, who is dressed as her famulus or valet. Hearing of the schoolmaster's misfortune, she proposes to put on Gretchen's clothes and to crave the Count's pardon under the bride's name. Baculus gladly accepts the student's proposal and accompanies him to the castle. Everybody is charmed by the graces and naiveté of the country-girl. The Count tries to make love to her, while Baron Kronthal, who is present, is so much enamoured, that he thinks of marrying her despite her low birth. Kronthal is the Countess of Eberbach's brother, but she does not know him as such, though she feels very greatly attracted by him. In order to save the girl from persecution, the Countess takes her with her into her room. Meanwhile the Count offers the sum of 5000 thalers to Baculus for the renunciation of his bride. The silly schoolmaster accepts the offer, thinking that the Count wishes to win the real Gretchen. By waking the latter's vanity, he succeeds in turning her affection to the Count, but great is his perplexity, when the Count rejects his bride and scornfully asks for the other Gretchen. Baculus avows at last, that the latter is a disguised student. Baron Kronthal, full of wrath, asks for satisfaction, the student having passed the night in his sister's room. On this occasion the others for the first time hear that the Countess is

the Baron's sister. He demands an explanation and then it is discovered that the student is the Baroness Freimann, sister of the Count of Eberbach. Everybody is content, for the Count, who was detected in the act of kissing the country-girl, declares, that with him it was the voice of nature that spoke, and the Countess, to whom he now presents Kronthal as her brother, makes a like statement. The unhappy Baculus receives full pardon from the Count, on condition that he will henceforth teach the children of the village, instead of shooting game.

THE POSTILION OF LONGJUMEAU.

Comic opera in three acts by **Adolphe Adam.**
Text by **Leuven and Brunswick.**

This charming little opera is well worthy of being named among the best of its kind, both on account of its delightful music and because the text is so entertaining and funny as entirely to captivate the hearer's interest.

The whole opera is essentially French in the best sense of the word and we scarce can find more graceful and witty composition. Its subject, written originally in good French verse is as follows:

Chapelou, a stage-driver at Longjumeau is about to celebrate his marriage with the young hostess of the post-house, Madeleine. The wedding has taken place and the young bride is led away by her friends, according to an old custom, while her bridegroom is held back by his comrades, who compel him to sing. He begins the romance of a

young postilion, who had the luck to be carried away by a Princess, having touched her heart by his beautiful playing on the cornet. Chapelou has such a fine voice, that the Superintendent of the Grand Opera at Paris, the Marquis de Corcy, who hears him, is enchanted, and being in search of a good tenor, succeeds in winning over Chapelou, who consents to leave his young wife in order to follow the Marquis' call to glory and fortune. He begs his friend Bijou, a smith, to console Madeleine, by telling her that he will soon return to her. While Madeleine calls for him in tenderest accents, he drives away with his protectors and Bijou delivers his message, determined to try his fortune in a similar way. The desperate Madeleine resolves to fly from the unhappy spot, where everything recalls to her her faithless husband.

In the second act we find Madeleine under the assumed name of Madame de Latour. She has inherited a fortune from an old aunt, and makes her appearance in Paris as a rich and noble lady, with the intention of punishing her husband, whom she however still loves. During these six years, that have passed since their wedding-day, Chapelou has won his laurels under the name of St. Phar and is now the first tenor of the Grand Opera and everybody's spoilt favorite. Bijou is with him as leader of the chorus, and is called Alcindor. We presently witness a comical rehearsal in which the principal singers are determined to do as badly as possible. They all seem hoarse and instead of singing, produce the most lamentable sounds. The Marquis de

Corcy is desperate, having promised this representation to Mme. Latour, at whose country-seat near Fontainebleau he is at present staying. As soon as St. Phar hears the name of this lady, his hoarseness is gone and all sing their best. We gather from this scene, that Mme. Latour has succeeded in enthralling St. Phar; he has an interview with her, and, won by his protestations of love, she consents to marry him.

St. Phar, not wishing to commit bigamy, begs his friend Bijou to perform the marriage-ceremony in a priest's garb, but Mme. Latour locks him in her room, along with Bourdon, the second leader of the chorus, while a real priest unites the pair for the second time.

St. Phar enters the room in high spirits, when his companions, beside themselves with fear, tell him that he has committed bigamy. While they are in mortal terror of being hanged, Mme. Latour enters in her former shape as Madeleine, and blowing out the candle, torments St. Phar, assuming now the voice of Mme. Latour, now that of Madeleine. — After having sent her fickle husband into an abyss of unhappiness and fear, the Marquis de Corcy, who had himself hoped to wed the charming widow, appears with the police to imprison the luckless St. Phar, who already considers himself as good as hanged, and in imagination sees his first wife Madeleine rejoicing over his punishment. But he has been made to suffer enough and at the last moment Madeleine explains everything, and Chapelou obtains her pardon.

PRECIOSA.

A drama in four acts by Alexander Wolff.

Musical accompaniment by Charles Maria von Weber.

Though Preciosa is not an opera, we may feel justified in admitting it into our collection, as the music, which Weber wrote to it has alone given celebrity to Wolff's drama, which would otherwise have long been forgotten.

This musical composition is justly called one of the German nation's jewels, and it shows all the best qualities of Weber's rich muse. It was written after the Freischütz and done in the incredibly short space of nine days, and owed its success principally to the really national coloring of melody, which has made some of its songs so popular.

The libretto is well done, the subject both attracting and interesting the hearer. The scene is laid in Spain. The first act introduces us to Madrid and takes us into the house of a noble Spaniard, named Don Francesco de Carcano. His son, Don Alonzo has fallen violently in love with a Bohemian girl, called Preciosa, whose beauty, virtue and charms are on everybody's lips. The father, wishing to know her, calls her before him and she comes with her people, enchanting the old nobleman as well as his son by her noble bearing and her exquisite songs.

The second act represents a forest with the gipsies' camp. Alonzo, who has told his father that he followed the army, but has in reality been seeking Preciosa, at length finds her out and tries

to win her. But though she returns his love, she is yet unwilling to follow him, and he resolves to link his fate with that of the Bohemians, in order to prove to Preciosa that his love is real and true. Dressed as a common hunter he follows his new friend, and the gipsies, who are all governed by Preciosa's will, swear never to betray him.

The third act introduces us into the castle of Don Azevedo in Valencia, a friend of Don Francesco's. The former is about to celebrate his silver-wedding. Eugenio, his son, hearing that Preciosa is in the neighborhood, resolves to win her for his father's festival, having heard of the latter's delight, at seeing the gipsy-girl in his friend's house at Madrid. Eugenio rouses the jealousy of Alonzo, who begins a quarrel which ends by Alonzo's being sent to prison.

The chief of the Bohemians and old mother Viarda who see too late, that they have come into dangerous grounds, break up their camp, but Preciosa, anxious about her lover, takes flight.

She is caught by the chief, but, seizing Alonzo's gun, which was left lying under a tree and threatening to fire if he does not obey her, she forces him to follow her into the castle.

The last act takes place in Azevedo's castle, where his wife, Donna Clara, touched by Preciosa's loveliness, is willing to assist her in liberating her lover. Meanwhile mother Viarda comes with the other gipsies to betray Alonzo's secret, asking one-thousand scudi and her chief's liberty. At this moment the youth's father, Don Francesco, comes

to offer his congratulations at the silver-wedding of his friend. He finds his son, whom he pardons, Preciosa having for his sake agreed to renounce her bridegroom. While bidding her hosts a sad farewell, Preciosa is so overcome by her feelings, that Donna Clara entreats her husband to buy the girl, whom she believes to be a stolen child. Don Fernando explains to the Bohemians, that he has the right to liberate Preciosa, who has been taken in his grounds, if they should be unable to prove her gipsy-descent. Old Viarda, finding that her schemes have fallen through, shows by a mark on Preciosa's shoulder, that the girl is Donna Clara's own daughter, who was robbed many years ago and was believed by her desolate parents to be drowned. In consideration of Preciosa's entreaties the gipsies are pardoned and only ordered to leave the country for ever. Preciosa is of course united to her faithful lover Alonzo.

LE PROPHÈTE.

Opera in five acts by Giacomo Meyerbeer.
Text by Scribe.

Though Meyerbeer never again attained the high standard of his Huguenots, the Prophet is not without both striking and powerful passages; it is even said, that motherly love never spoke in accents more touching than in this opera. The text is again historical, but though done by Scribe, it is astonishingly weak and uninteresting.

The scene is laid in Holland at the time of the wars with the Anabaptists.

Fides, mother of the hero, John von Leyden, keeps an inn near Dortrecht. She has just bethrothed a young peasant-girl to her son, but Bertha is a vassal of the Count of Oberthal and dare not marry without his permission.

As they set about getting his consent to the marriage, three Anabaptists, Jonas, Mathisen and Zacharias appear, exciting the people with their speeches and false promises. While they are preaching, Oberthal enters, but smitten with Bertha's charms he refuses his consent to her marriage and carries her off with Fides as companion.

In the second act we find John, waiting for his bride; as she delays, the Anabaptists try to win him for their cause, they prophesy him a crown, but as yet he is not ambitious, and life with Bertha looks sweeter to him than the greatest honors. As the night comes on, Bertha rushes in to seek refuge from her pursuer, from whom she has fled. — Hardly has she hidden herself, when Oberthal enters to claim her. John refuses his assistance, but when Oberthal threatens to kill his mother, he gives up Bertha to the Count, while his mother, whose life he has saved at such a price, asks God's benediction on his head. Then she retires for the night, and the Anabaptists appear once more, again trying to win John over. This time they succeed. Without a farewell to his sleeping mother, John follows the Anabaptists, to be henceforth their leader, their Prophet, their Messiah.

In the third act we see the Anabaptists' camp, their soldiers have captured a party of noblemen,

who are to pay ransom. They all make merry and the famous ballet on the ice forms part of the amusements. In the back-ground we see Münster, which town is in the hands of Count Oberthal's father, who refuses to surrender it to the enemy. They resolve to storm it, a resolution, which is heard by young Oberthal, who has come disguised to the Anabaptists' camp in order to save his father and the town.

But as a light is struck, he is recognized and is about to be killed, when John hears from him that Bertha has escaped. She sprang out of the window to save her honor, and falling into the stream, was saved. When John learns this, he bids the soldiers spare Oberthal's life, that he may be judged by Bertha herself.

John has already endured great pangs of conscience at seeing his party so wild and bloodthirsty. He refuses to go further, but hearing, that an army of soldiers has broken out of Münster to destroy the Anabaptists, he rallies. Praying fervently to God for help and victory, inspiration comes over him and is communicated to all his adherents, so that they resolve to storm Münster. They succeed and in the fourth act we are in the midst of this town, where we find Fides, who, knowing that her son has turned Anabaptist, though not aware of his being their Prophet, is receiving alms to save his soul by masses. She meets Bertha, disguised in a pilgrim's garb. Both vehemently curse the Prophet, when this latter appears, to be crowned in state.

His mother recognizes him, but he disowns her, declaring her mad, and by strength of will he compels the poor mother to renounce him. Fides, in order to save his life, avows that she was mistaken and she is led to prison.

In the last act we find the three Anabaptists, Mathisen, Jonas and Zacharias together. The Emperor is near the gates of Münster, and they resolve to deliver their Prophet into his hands in order to save their lives.

Fides has been brought into a dungeon, where John visits her to ask her pardon and to save her. She curses him, but his repentance moves her so, that she pardons him when he promises to leave his party. At this moment Bertha enters. She has sworn to kill the false Prophet, and she comes to the dungeon to set fire to the gunpowder, hidden beneath it. Fides detains her, but when she recognizes that her bridegroom and the Prophet, are one and the same person, she wildly denounces him for his bloody deeds and stabs herself in his presence. Then John decides to die also and after the soldiers have led his mother away, he himself sets fire to the vault.

Then he appears at the coronation-banquet, where he knows that he is to be taken prisoner, When Oberthal, the Bishop and all his treacherous friends are assembled, he bids two of his faithful soldiers close the gates and fly. This done, the castle is blown into the air with all its inhabitants. At the last moment Fides rushes in to share her son's fate, and all are thus buried under the ruins.

Aug 7-'92 Dresden Saxony. Royal Opera House.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

(DIE KÖNIGIN VON SABA.)

Grand opera in four acts by Charles Goldmark.

Text by Mosenthal.

Charles Goldmark was born in Hungary in 1852. He received his musical education in Vienna.

The well-known name of Mosenthal is in itself a warrant that the libretto is excellently suited to the music. The opera is considered one of the best and finest of our modern compositions.

It is noble, original and full of brilliant orchestral effects, which, united to a grand, not to say gorgeous mise-en-scène, captivate our senses.

The contents are these:

A magnificent wedding is to be celebrated in King Solomon's palace at Jerusalem. The High-priest's daughter, Sulamith, is to marry Assad, King Solomon's favorite. But the lover, who has in a foreign country seen a most beautiful and proud woman bathing in a forest-well, is now in love with the stranger and has forgotten his destined bride.

She was a Saracen

Returning home Assad confesses his error to the wise King and Solomon bids him wed Sulamith and forget the heathen. Assad gives his promise, praying to God to restore peace to his breast.

Then enters the Queen of Sheba in all her glory, followed by a procession of slaves and suitors. Next to her litter walks her principal slave, Astaroth.

The Queen comes to offer her homage to the great Solomon with all the gifts of her rich kingdom.

The ballet here is perfectly fascinating, & th

She is veiled, and nobody has seen her yet, as only before the King will she unveil herself.

When she draws back the veil, shining in all her perfect beauty, Assad starts forward; he recognizes her; she is his nymph of the forest. But the proud Queen knows him not, she ignores him altogether. Solomon and Sulamith try to reassure themselves, to console Assad, and the Queen hears Solomon's words: „To-morrow shall find you united to your bride!" She starts and casts a passionate look on the unfortunate Assad.

The Queen is full of raging jealousy of the young bride. But though she claims Assad's love for herself, she is yet too proud to resign her crown, and so, hesitating between love and pride, she swears vengeance on her rival. Under the shade of night her slave-woman, Astaroth, allures Assad to the fountain, where he finds the Queen, who employs all her arts again to captivate him, succeeding alas, only too well.

Morning dawns and with it the day of Assad's marriage with Sulamith. Solomon and the High-priest conduct the youth to the altar, but just as he is taking the ring, offered to him by the bride's father, the Queen of Sheba appears, bringing as wedding-gift a golden cup, filled with pearls.

Assad, again overcome by the Queen's dazzling beauty, throws the ring away and precipitates himself at her feet. The Levites detain him, but Solomon guessing at the truth, implores the Queen to speak. Assad invokes all the sweet memories of their past, the Queen hesitates, but her pride

conquers. For the second time she disowns him. — Now everybody believes Assad possessed by an evil spirit, and the priests at once begin to exorcise it; it is all but done, when one word of the Queen's, who sweetly calls him „Assad", spoils everything. He is in her bands: falling on his knees before her, he prays to her as to his goddess. Wrathful at this blasphemy in the temple, the priests demand his death.

Assad asks not better, Sulamith despairs and the Queen repents having gone so far. In the great tumult Solomon alone is unmoved. He detains the priests with dignity, for he alone will judge Assad.

There now follows a charming ballet, given in honor of the Queen of Sheba. At the end of the meal, the Queen demands Assad's pardon from Solomon. He refuses her request. She now tries to ensnare the King with her charms, as she did Assad, but in vain. Solomon sees her in her true light and treats her with cold politeness. Almost beside herself with rage, the Queen threatens to take vengeance on the King and to free Assad at any risk.

Solomon, well understanding the vile tricks of the eastern Queen, has changed the verdict of death into that of exile. Sulamith, faithful and gentle, entreats for her lover, and has only one wish: to sweeten life to her Assad, or to die with him.

We find Assad in the desert. He is broken down and deeply repents his folly, when, lo, the

Queen appears once more, hoping to lure him with soft words and tears. But this time her beauty is lost upon him; he has at last recognized her false soul; with noble pride he scorns her, preferring to expiate his follies by dying in the desert. He curses her, praying to God to save him from the temptress. — Henceforth he thinks only of Sulamith and invokes Heaven's benediction on her. He is dying in the dreadful heat of the desert, when Sulamith appears, the faithful one who without resting has sought her bridegroom till now. But alas, in vain she kneels beside him, couching his head on her bosom; his life is fast ebbing away. — Heaven has granted his last wish; he sees Sulamith before his death and with the sigh: „Liberation!", he sinks back and expires.

DER RATTENFÄNGER VON HAMELN.

(THE RATCATCHER OF HAMELN.)

Opera in five acts by Victor Nessler.

Text by Fr. Hofmann, from Julius Wolff's legend of the same name.

Without any preliminary introduction to the musical world Nessler wrote this opera and at once became, not only known, but a universal favorite; so much so that there is scarcely a theatre in Germany, in which this work of his is not now given.

The subject of the libretto is a most favorable one, like that of Nessler's later composition, „the Trumpeter of Saekkingen"; the principal personage, Singuf, being particularly well suited for a first-rate stage hero.

Then Wolff's poetical songs are music in themselves, and it was therefore not difficult to work out interesting melodies, of which as a matter of fact we find many in this opera.

The scene of the following events is the old town of Hameln on the Weser in the year 1284. The citizens are assembled to hold council, as to how the rat-plague of the town is to be got rid of. No one is able to suggest a remedy when suddenly the clerk of the senate, Ethelerus, announces a stranger, who offers to destroy all the rats and mice in the place, solely by the might of his flute. Hunold Singuf, a wandering Bohemian, enters and repeats his offer, asking one hundred Marks in silver as his reward and forbidding everybody listen or to be present, while he works his charm.

The senators comply with his request, promising him in addition a drink from the town-cellar, when the last rat shall have disappeared, which is to be when the moon is full.

In the following scene the Burgomaster's daughter Regina is with her old cousin Dorothea. She expects her bridegroom, the architect of the town and son of the chief-magistrate, Heribert Sunneborn, who has just returned home from a long stay abroad. While the lovers greet each other, Ethelerus, who has wooed Regina in vain, stands aside greatly mortified.

The second act opens in an inn, where Hunold makes the people dance and sing to his wonderful melodies. There he first sees the maid, who has appeared to him in his dreams. She is Gertrud, a

fishermaiden and: To look is to love — they are attracted to each-other as by a magic spell. Wulf, the smith, who loves Gertrud, sees it with distrust, but Hunold begins to sing his finest songs. In the evening the lovers meet before Gertrud's hut, and full of anxious forebodings, she tries to turn him from his designs and is only half-quieted, when he assures her that no fiendish craft is at work and that he will do it for the last time.

In the third act Ethelerus holds council with magister Rhynperg as to the means, by which they can best succeed in teasing and provoking the proud Sunneburn. Hunold enters, and agreeable to an invitation of theirs, sits down to drink a bottle of wine. They make him drink and sing a good deal, and he boasts of being able to make the maidens all fall in love with him, if he chooses. Rhynperg suggests that he must omit the Burgomaster's daughter Regina, and he succeeds in making Hunold accept a wager, that he will obtain a kiss from her before his departure.

The following night Hunold accomplishes the exorcism of the rats, which may be seen running towards him from every part of the town and precipitating themselves into the river. Unhappily, Wulf, standing in a recess, has seen and heard all and coming forward to threaten Hunold, the latter hurls his dagger after him, upon which Wulf takes flight.

In the fourth act the whole town is assembled to rejoice in its deliverance from the awful plague, but when Hunold asks for his reward, the Burgo-

master tells him, that a so-called rat-king, a beast with five heads, has been seen in his (the Burgomaster's) cellar, to which complaint Hunold replies, that it is the smith's fault, who listened against his express prohibition. He promises to destroy the rat-king on the same day and once more claims his due, together with the promised parting gift, which he begs to be, not a drink of wine, but a kiss from Regina's lips. Of course everybody is astounded at his insolence, and the angry Burgomaster bids him leave the town at once, without his money. But Hunold, nothing daunted, begins to sing so beautifully that the hearts of all the women yearn towards him, he continues still more passionately, addressing himself directly to Regina, and never stops till the maiden, carried away by a passion unconquerable, offers her lips for a kiss, swearing to be his own forever. A great tumult arises and Hunold is taken to prison, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Ethelerus, who bitterly repents having had anything to do with Rhynperg's bad joke.

The fifth act takes us to the banks of the Weser, where Gertrud sits in despair. She deems herself betrayed by Hunold, but resolves nevertheless to save his life.

Hunold is brought before the judges and condemned to be burnt alive as a sorcerer, when Gertrud steps forth, claiming his life. In pursuance of an old privilege, Hunold is free when a maid of the town claims him, but he is banished from the country and Gertrud with him.

Hunold promises never to return, but Gertrud throws herself into the river.

Then Hunold swears to avenge the death of his bride. While the citizens are in church, he lures away their children by playing on his flute; all follow him, both great and small. When he has led them safely over the bridge, he calls the people from church. All gather on the banks of the stream, but they are only just in time to see the bridge fall into the river, while the mountain opposite opens, swallowing up Hunold and the children for ever.

THE NIBELUNGEN RING.

A festival play in three days and a fore-evening by Richard Wagner.

THE RHINEGOLD.

This grand dramatic work, which cannot any longer with justice be called an opera, differing as it does so considerably from the ordinary style of these, is the result of many years of study and hard work.

Wagner took the subject from the German mythology, the oldest representative of which is found in the Edda.

We have first to do with the fore-evening, called the „Rhinegold".

The first scene is laid in the very depths of the Rhine, where we see three nymphs, frolicking in the water. They are the guardians of the Rhinegold, which glimmers on a rock.

Alberich, a Nibelung, highly charmed by their grace and beauty, tries to make love to each-one of them alternately. As he is an ugly dwarf, they at first allure and then deride him, gliding away as soon as he comes near and laughing at him. — Discovering their mockery at last, he swears vengeance. He sees the Rhinegold shining brightly, and asks the nymphs what it means. They tell him of its wonderful qualities, which would render the owner all-powerful, if he should form it into a ring and forswear love.

Alberich, listening attentively, all at once climbs the rock, and before the frightened nymphs can cry for help, has grasped the treasure and disappeared. Darkness comes on; the scene changes into an open district on mountain-heights. In the back-ground we see a grand castle, which the rising sun illumines. Wotan, the father of the gods, and Fricka, his wife, are slumbering on the ground. Awakening, their eyes fall on the castle for the first time. It is the „Walhalla", the palace, which the giants have built for them at Wotan's bidding. As a reward for their services they are to obtain Freia, the goddess of youth; but already Wotan repents of his promise and forms plans with his wife, to save her lovely sister. The giants Fafner and Fasold enter to claim their reward. While they negociate, Loge, the god of fire, comes up, relates the history of Alberich's theft of the Rhinegold and tells Wotan of the gold's power. Wotan decides to rob the dwarf, promising the treasure to the giants, who consent to accept it in Freia's stead.

But they distrust the gods and take Freia with them as a pledge. As soon as she disappears, the beautiful gods seem old and grey and wrinkled, for the golden apples to which Freia attends and of which the gods partake daily to be forever youthful, wither as soon as she is gone. Then Wotan without any further delay starts for Nibelheim with Loge, justifying his intention by saying that the gold is stolen property. They disappear in a cleft and we find ourselves in a subterranean cavern, the abode of the Nibelungs.

Alberich has forced his brother Mime to forge a „Tarnhelm“ for him, which renders its wearer invisible. Mime vainly tries to keep it for himself; Alberich, the possessor of the all-powerful ring, which he himself formed, takes it by force and making himself invisible, strikes Mime with a whip, until the latter is half dead. Wotan and Loge, hearing his complaints, promise to help him. Alberich, coming forth again, is greatly flattered by Wotan and dexterously led on to show his might. He first changes himself into an enormous snake and then into a toad. Wotan quickly puts his foot on it, while Loge seizes the Tarnhelm. Alberich, becoming suddenly visible in his real shape, is bound and led away captive. The gods return to the mountain-heights of the second scene, where Alberich is compelled to part with all his treasures, which are brought by the dwarfs. He is even obliged to leave the ring, which Wotan intends to keep for himself. With a dreadful curse upon the possessor of the ring Alberich flies.

When the giants reappear with Freia, the treasures are heaped before her; they are to cover her entirely, so it is decided, and not before, will she be free. When all the gold has been piled up, and even the Tarnhelm thrown on the hoard, Fasold still sees Freia's eye shine through it and at last Wotan, who is most unwilling to part with the ring, is induced to do so by Erda, goddess of the earth, who appears to him and warns him. Now the pledge is kept and Freia is released. The giants quarrel over the possession of the ring and Fafner kills Fasold, thereby fulfilling Alberich's curse. With lightened hearts the gods cross the rainbow-bridge and enter Walhalla, while the songs and wailings of the Rhine-nymphs are heard, imploring the restitution of their lost treasure.

RIENZI, THE LAST OF THE TRIBUNES.

Grand tragic opera in five acts by Richard Wagner.

In this first opera of Wagner's one hardly recognizes the great master of later times. — But though Wagner himself disowned this early child of his muse, there is a grand energy in it, which preserves it from triviality. The orchestration is brilliant, the brass instruments predominating, and here and there one may find traces of the peculiar power which led up to the greatness of after-years, and which sometimes make one think of Tannhäuser.

The libretto, taken by Wagner from Bulwer's novel, is attractive and powerful.

The hero, a pontifical notary, is a man of lofty ambition, dreaming in the midst of the depravity of the 14th century of reerecting the old Roma, and making her once more the Sovereign of the world. He receives help and encouragement from the church; Cardinal Raimondo even bids him try all means, in order to attain his end. The clergy as well as the people are oppressed by the almighty and insolent nobles.

In the first scene we witness an act of brutality, directed against Rienzi's sister Irene, who is however liberated by Adriano, son of the noble Colonna. A Colonna it was, who murdered Rienzi's little brother in sheer wantonness. — Rienzi has sworn vengeance, but, seeing Adriano good and brave and in love with his sister, he wins him to his cause.

The nobles having left Rome to fight out a quarrel, which had been started among them, are forbidden to reenter the town. — Rienzi calls the people to arms and is victorious. The strongholds of the nobles are burnt, and they are only admitted into Rome, on promising submission to the new laws, made and represented by Rienzi, who has been created Tribune of Rome.

The hostile parties of Colonna and Orsini then join to destroy the hated plebeian. In the midst of the festivity in the Capitol, Orsini makes an attempt to murder Rienzi, but the latter wears a shirt of mail under his garments and besides he is

warned by Adriano, who has overheard the conspiracy. The whole plot fails and the nobles who have taken part in it are unanimously condemned to death. But Adriano full of remorse on account of his treason against his own father, implores Rienzi, to save their lives, and as Irene joins her prayers to those of her lover, the culprits are pardoned and obliged to renew their oath of fidelity. From this time on Rienzi's star begins to pale. The nobles do not adhere to their oath; in the third act they again give battle, and though Rienzi is again victorious, it is only at the cost of severe sacrifices. The nobles are slain, and now Adriano, who had in vain begged for peace, turns against Rienzi.

In the fourth act Adriano denounces him as a traitor; the people easily misled, begin to mistrust him, and when even the church, which has assisted him up till this time anathematises him on account of his last bloody deed, all desert him. Irene alone clings to her brother and repulses her lover scornfully, when he tries to take her from Rienzi's side. Both brother and sister retire into the Capitol, where Adriano once more vainly implores Irene to fly with him. For the last time Rienzi attempts to reassert his power, but his words are drowned in the general uproar. They are greeted by a hail of stones, the Capitol is set on fire, and they perish like heroes in the flames, through which Adriano makes his way at the last moment and thus finds a common grave with his bride and her brother, the last of the Tribunes.

RIGOLETTO.

Opera in three acts by Verdi.

Text by Piave from Victor Hugo's drama: „Le roi s'amuse".

No opera has become popular in so short a time as Rigoletto in Italy. The music is very winning and is, like all that Verdi has written, full of exquisite melodies.

In Germany it has not met with the same favor, which is due in great part to its awful libretto, which is a faithful copy of Hugo's drama, and developed in a truly dramatic manner. The subject is however rather disgusting. Excepting Gilda, we do not meet with one noble character.

The Duke of Mantua, a wild and debauched youth, covets every girl or woman he sees, and is assisted in his vile purposes by his jester, Rigoletto, an ugly, hump-backed man. We meet him first helping the Duke to seduce the wife of Count Ceprano, and afterwards the wife of Count Monterone. Both husbands curse the vile Rigoletto and swear to be avenged. Monterone especially, appearing like a ghost in the midst of a festival, hurls such a fearful curse at them, that Rigoletto shudders.

This bad man has one tender point, it is his blind love for his beautiful daughter Gilda, whom he brings up carefully, keeping her hidden from the world and shielding her from all wickedness.

But the cunning Duke discovers her and gains her love under the assumed name of a student, named Gualtier Maldé.

Gilda is finally carried off by Ceprano and two other courtiers, aided by her own father, who

holds the ladder believing that Count Ceprano's wife is to be the victim. — A mask blinds Rigoletto and he discovers, too late, by Gilda's cries that he has been duped. Gilda is brought to the Duke's palace. — Rigoletto appears in the midst of the courtiers to claim Gilda, and then they hear that she, whom they believed to be his mistress, is his daughter, for whose honor he is willing to sacrifice everything. — Gilda enters and though she sees that she has been deceived, she implores her father to pardon the Duke, whom she still loves. But Rigoletto vows vengeance, and engages Sparafucile to stab the Duke. Sparafucile decoys him into his inn, where his sister Maddalena awaits him. She too is enamoured of the Duke, who makes love to her, as to all young females, and she entreats her brother to have mercy on him. Sparafucile declares that he will wait until midnight, and will spare him, if another victim should turn up before then. Meanwhile Rigoletto pursuades his daughter to fly from the Duke's pursuit, but before he takes her away, he wants to show her lover's fickleness, in order to cure her of her love.

She comes to the inn in masculine attire, and hearing the discourse between Sparafucile and his sister, resolves to save her lover. She enters the inn and is instantly put to death, placed in a sack and given to Rigoletto, who proceeds to the river, to dispose of the corpse. At this instant he hears the voice of the Duke, who passes by, singing a frivolous tune. Terrified, Rigoletto opens the sack, and recognizes his daughter, who is yet able to

tell him, that she gave her life for that of her seducer and then expires. With an awful cry, the unhappy father sinks upon the corpse. Count Monterone's curse has been fulfilled.

ROBERT LE DIABLE.

Opera in five acts by Meyerbeer.
Text by Scribe and Delavigne.

Though the text, which embodies the well-known story of Robert the Devil, Duke of Normandy, is often weak and involved, Meyerbeer has understood in masterly fashion how to adapt his music to it, infusing into it dramatic strength and taking his hearer captive from beginning to end. The instrumentation is brilliant, and the splendid parts for the human voice deserve like praise. The famous Cavatina „Air of grace", as it is called, where the bugle has such a fine part, and the duet in the fourth act between Robert and the Princess Isabella, in which the harp fairly rouses us to wonder whether we are not listening to celestial music — are but two of the enchanting features of an opera in which such features abound.

The following are the contents of the libretto:

Robert, Duke of Normandy, has a friend of gloomy exterior, named Bertram, with whom he travels, but to whose evil influence he owes much trouble and sorrow. Without knowing it himself, Robert is the son of this erring knight, who is an inhabitant of hell. During his wanderings on earth he seduced Bertha, daughter of the Duke of Normandy, whose offspring Robert is. This youth is

very wild and has therefore been banished from his country.

Arriving in Sicily, Isabella, the King's daughter and he, fall mutually in love.

In the first act we find Robert in Palermo, surrounded by other knights, to whom a young countryman of his, Raimbaut, tells the story of „Robert le Diable" and his fiendish father; warning everybody against them. Robert, giving his name, is about to deliver the unhappy Raimbaut to the hangman, when the peasant is saved by his bride Alice, Robert's foster-sister. She has come to Palermo by order of Robert's deceased mother, who sends her last will to her son, in case he should change his bad habits and prove himself worthy. Robert, feeling that he is not likely to do this, begs Alice to keep it for him. He confides in the innocent maiden, and she promises to reason with Isabella, whom Robert has irritated by his jealousy, and who has banished him from her presence.

As a recompense for her service Alice asks Robert's permission to marry Raimbaut. Seeing Robert's friend, Bertram, she recognizes the latter's likeness to Satan, whom she saw in a picture, and instinctively shrinks from him. When she leaves her master, Bertram induces his friend to try his fortune with the dice and he loses all.

In the second act we are introduced into the palace of Isabella, who laments Robert's inconstancy. Alice enters bringing Robert's letter and the latter instantly follows to crave his mistress' pardon. She presents him with a new suit of ar-

mor, and he consents to meet the Prince of Granada in mortal combat. But Bertram lures him away by deceiving him with a phantom. Robert vainly seeks the Prince in the forest, and the Prince of Granada is in his absence victorious in the tournament and obtains Isabella's hand.

The third act opens with a view of the rocks of St. Irene, where Alice hopes to be united with Raimbaut. The peasant expects his bride, but meets Bertram instead, who makes him forget Alice, by giving him gold and dangerous advice. Raimbaut goes away to spend the money, while Bertram descends to the evil spirits in the deep. When Alice comes, Raimbaut is gone, and she hears the demons calling for Bertram. Bertram extracts a promise from her not to betray the dreadful secret of the cavern. She clings to the Saviour's cross for protection, and is about to be destroyed by Bertram, when Robert approaches, to whom she decides to reveal all. But Bertram's renewed threats at last oblige her to leave them.

Bertram now profits by Robert's rage and despair at the loss of his bride, his wealth and his honor, to draw him on to entire destruction. He tells Robert that his rival used magic arts, and suggests that he should try the same expedient. Then he leads him to a ruined cloister, where he resuscitates the guilty nuns. They try to seduce Robert first by drink, then by gambling, and last of all by love. In the last, Helena, the most beautiful of the nuns, succeeds and makes him remove the cypress-branch, a talisman, by which in the

fourth act he enters Isabella's apartment unseen. He awakes his bride out of her magic sleep, to carry her off, but overcome by her tears and her appeal to his honor, he breaks the talisman, and is seized by the now awakened soldiers; but Bertram appears, and takes him under his protection.

The fifth act opens with a chorus sung by monks, which is followed by a prayer for mercy. Robert, concealed in the vestibule of the cathedral, hears it full of contrition. But Bertram is with him, and, his term on earth being short, he confides to Robert the secret of his birth and appeals to him as his father.

He almost succeeds, when Alice comes up, bringing the news that the Prince of Granada renounces Isabella's hand, being unable to pass the the threshold of the church. Bertram urges Robert all the more vehemently to become one with him, suggesting that Isabella is likewise lost to him, who has transgressed the laws of the church, when in the last extremity Alice produces his mother's will, in which she warns him against Bertram, entreating him to save his soul. Then at last his good angel is victorious, his demon-father vanishes into the earth and Robert, united by prayer to the others, is restored to a life of peace and goodness.

LE ROI L'A DIT.

(THE KING HAS SAID IT.)

Comic opera in three acts by Léo Délibes.

Text by Edmond Gondinet.

It is impossible to imagine music more charming or more full of grace and piquancy, than that

which we find in this delightful opera. Every part abounds in exquisite harmonies, which no words can give any idea of. On hearing them one is compelled to the conclusion, that all the graces have stood godmother to this lovely child of their muse.

The libretto though on the whole somewhat insipid, is flavored with naïve and goodnatured coquetry, which lends a certain charm to it.

The Marquis de Moncontour has long wished to be presented to the King Louis XIV., and as he has been fortunate enough to catch the escaped paroquet of M^me^. de Maintenon, he is at last to have his wish accomplished. By way of preparation for his audience he tries to learn the latest mode of bowing, his own being somewhat antiquated and the Marquise and her four lovely daughters and even Javotte, the nice little ladies'-maid, assist him. After many failures the old gentleman succeeds in making his bow to his own satisfaction, and he is put into a litter, and borne off, followed by his people's benedictions. When they are gone, Benoit, a young peasant comes to see Javotte, who is his sweetheart. He wishes to enter the Marquis' service. Javotte thinks him too awkward, but she promises to intercede in his favor with Miton, a dancing-master, who enters just as Benoit disappears. He has instructed the graceful Javotte in all the arts and graces of the noble world, and when he rehearses the steps and all the nice little tricks of his art with her, he is so delighted with his pupil, that he pronounces her manners worthy of a Prin-

cess; but when Javotte tells him that she loves a peasant, he is filled with disgust and orders her away. His real pupils, the four lovely daughters of the Marquis now enter and while the lesson goes on, Miton hands a billet-doux, from some lover to each of them. The two elder, Agathe and Chimene, are just in the act of reading theirs, when they hear a serenade outside, and shortly afterwards the two lovers are standing in the room, having taken their way through the window. The Marquis Flarembel and his friend, the Marquis de la Bluette are just making a most ardent declaration of love, when M^me^. la Marquise enters to present to her elder daughters the two bridegrooms she has chosen for them. The young men hide behind the ample dresses of the young ladies, and all begin to sing with great zeal, Miton beating the measure, so that some time elapses, before the Marquise is able to state her errand. Of course her words excite great terror, the girls flying to the other side of the room with their lovers and receiving the two elderly suitors, Baron de Merlussac and Gautru, a rich old financier, with great coolness and a refusal of their costly gifts. When the suitors are gone, the two young strangers are detected and the angry mother decides at once to send her daughters to a convent, from which they shall only issue on their wedding-day.

When they have departed in a most crest-fallen condition, the old Marquis returns from his audience with the King and relates its astounding results. His majesty had been so peremptory in his questioning

about the Marquis' son and heir, that the Marquis, losing his presence of mind, promised to present his son at court on the King's demand. The only question now is where to find a son to adopt, as the Marquis has only four daughters. Miton, the ever-useful, at once presents Benoit to the parents, engaging himself, to drill the peasant into a nice cavalier in ten lessons. Benoit takes readily to his new position; he is fitted out at once and when the merchants come, offering their best in cloth and finery, he treats them with an insolence, worthy of the proudest Seigneur. He even turns from his sweet-heart Javotte.

In the second act Benoit, dressed like the finest cavalier, gives a masked ball in his father's gardens. Half Versailles is invited, but having taken the Court-Almanach to his aid, he has made the mistake of inviting many people who have long been dead. Those who do appear, seem to him to be very insipid, and wanting some friends, with whom he can enjoy himself, the useful Miton presents the Marquises de la Bluette and de Flarembel, who are delighted to make the acquaintance of their sweethearts' brother.

Benoit hears from them, that he has four charming sisters, who have been sent to a convent and he at once promises to assist his new friends. Meanwhile Javotte appears in the mask of an oriental Queen and Benoit makes love to her, but he is very much stupified, when she takes off her mask, and he recognizes Javotte. She laughingly turns away from him, when the good-for-nothing youth's

new parents appear, to reproach him with his levity. But Benoit, nothing daunted rushes away, telling the Marquis that he intends to visit his sisters in the convent. Miton tries in vain to recall him. Then the two old suitors of Agathe and Chimene appear, to complain that their deceased wife and grand-mother were invited, and while the Marquis explains his son's mistake, the four daughters rush in, having been liberated by their lovers and their unknown brother, whom they greet with a fondness very shocking to the old Marchioness. The elderly suitors withdraw, swearing to take vengeance on the inopportune brother.

In the last act Benoit appears in his father's house in a somewhat dilapidated state. He has spent the night amongst gay companions and met Gautru and de Merlussac successively, who have both fought him and believe they have killed him, Benoit having feigned to be dead on the spot.

When the old Marquis enters, he is very much astonished at receiving two letters of condolence from his daughter's suitors. Miton appears in mourning, explaining that M^me^. de Maintenon's visit being expected, they must all wear dark colors as she prefers these. Meanwhile Benoit has had an interview with Javotte, in which he declares his love to be undiminished, and he at once asks his father to give him Javotte as his wife, threatening to reveal the Marquis' deceit to the King, if his request is not granted. In this dilemma help comes in the persons of the two young Marquises, who present their King's condolences to old Mon-

contour. This gentleman hears to his great relief, that his son is supposed to have fallen in a duel, and so he is disposed of. Nobody is happier than Javotte, who now claims Benoit for her own, while the Marquis, who receives a Duke's title from the King in compensation for his loss, gladly gives his two elder daughters to their young and noble lovers.

The girls, well aware, that they owe their happiness to their adopted brother, are glad to provide him with ample means for his marriage with Javotte, and the affair ends to everybody's satisfaction.

ROMEO E GIULIETTA.

Grand opera in five acts by Ch. Gounod.

Text by Barbier and Carré.

This highly favored opera by Gounod presents much that is worthy of admiration, though it does not rise to the high level of his Marguerite (Faust). The libretto follows Shakespeare's version pretty accurately.

The first act opens with the masked ball in Capuletti's palace, where the first meeting between the lovers takes place, Romeo being disguised as a pilgrim. They fall in love with each other, and Tybalt, Capulet's nephew, recognizing Romeo, reveals, but too late, their true names and swears to take revenge on his foe, who has thus entered the Capulet's house uninvited.

The second act represents the famous scene on the balcony between Juliet and her lover.

In the third act Romeo visits Friar Lorenzo's

cell, to get advice from him. There he meets Juliet. Lorenzo unites the lovers, hoping hereby to reconciliate the hostile houses of the Montagus and the Capulets.

The following scene represents the street before Capulet's palace. where the rivals meet; there ensues the double duel, first between Tybalt and Romeo's friend Mercutio, who falls and then between Romeo, who burns to avenge his comrade, and Tybalt. Tybalt is killed and Romeo is obliged to fly, all the Capulets being after him.

In the fourth act Romeo sees Juliet in her room, but when the morning dawns he is obliged to leave, while Juliet's father comes to remind her of his last promise to the dying Tybalt, which was, to marry Juliet to Count Paris. —

Juliet in great perplexity turns to Friar Lorenzo for help. — He gives her a draught which will cause her to fall into a deep swoon, and after being laid in her ancestor's tomb, she is to be awakened by Romeo and carried away into security.

In the fifth act Romeo, after having taken poison enters the tomb to bid farewell to Juliet, whom he, by a fatal misunderstanding, believes to be dead. — She awakes, and seeing her bridegroom die before her eyes, she stabs herself, to be united with her lover in death if not in life.

IL SERAGLIO.

Opera in three acts by Mozart.

Text after Bretzner by G. Stephanie.

Mozart modestly called this opera a Vaudeville (in German: Singspiel.) They were the fashion

towards the end of the last century, but „Il Seraglio“ ranks much higher, and may be justly called a comic opera of the most pleasing kind. The music is really charming, both fresh and original.

The libretto is equally happy. It particularly inspired Mozart because given to him by the Emperor Joseph II at a time, when he (Mozart), a happy bridegroom, was about to conduct into his home his beloved Constanze. The contents are as follows:

Constanza, the betrothed bride of Belmonte is with her maid Bionda (Blondchen) and Pedrillo, Belmonte's servant, captured by pirates. All three are sold as slaves to Selim Pasha, who keeps the ladies in his harem, taking Constanza for himself and giving Bionda to his overseer Osmin. Pedrillo has found means to inform his master of their misfortune, and Belmonte comes seeking entrance to the Pasha's villa in the guise of an artist. Osmin, who is much in love with Bionda, though she treats him haughtily, distrusts the artist and tries to interfere. But Pedrillo, who is gardener in the Pasha's service, frustrates Osmin's purpose and Belmonte is engaged. The worthy Pasha is quite infatuated with Constanza and tries hard to gain her affections. But Constanza has sworn to be faithful till death to Belmonte and great is her rapture, when Bionda brings the news that her lover is near.

With the help of Pedrillo, who manages to intoxicate Osmin, they try to escape, but Osmin overtakes them and brings them back to the Pasha,

who at once orders that they be brought before him. — Constanza, advancing with noble courage, explains that the pretended artist is her lover, and that she will rather die with him than leave him. Selim Pasha, overwhelmed by this discovery, retires to think about what he shall do and his prisoners prepare for death, Belmonte and Constanza with renewed tender protestations of love, Pedrillo and Bionda without either fear or trembling.

Great is their happiness and Osmin's wrath, when the noble Pasha, touched by their constancy, sets them free, and asks for their friendship, bidding them remember him kindly after their return into their own country.

SIEGFRIED.

Second day of the Nibelungen Ring by Wagner.

Musical drama in three acts.

The first act represents a part of the forest, where Fafner guards the Rhinegold and where Sieglinda has found refuge. We find her son Siegfried, — to whom when she was dying, she gave birth — in the rocky cave of Mime the Nibelung, (brother of Alberich), who has brought up the child as his own, knowing that he is destined to slay Fafner and to gain the ring, which he covets for himself. Siegfried, the brave and innocent boy, instinctively shrinks from this father, who is so ugly, so mean and vulgar, while he has a deep longing for his dead mother, whom he never knew. He gives vent to these feelings in impatient questions about her. The dwarf answers unwillingly and gives him the

broken pieces of the old sword Nothung (needful), which his mother left as the only precious remembrance of Siegfried's father.

Siegfried orders Mime to forge the fragments afresh, while he rushes away into the woods.

During his absence Wotan comes to Mime in the guise of a wanderer. Mime, though he knows him not, fears him and would fain drive him away. Finally he puts three questions to his guest. The first is the name of the race, which lives in earth's deepest depths, the second the name of those, who live on earth's back and the third, that of those, who live above the clouds. Of course Wotan answers them all, redeeming his head and shelter thereby; but now it is his turn to put three questions. He first asks what race it is, that Wotan loves most, though he dealt hardly with them, and Mime answers rightly, that they are the Waelsungs, whose son Siegfried is; then Wotan asks after the sword, which is to make Siegfried victorious. Mime joyously names „Nothung", but when Wotan asks him, who is to unite the pieces, he is in great embarrassment, for he remembers his task and perceives too late, what question he ought to have asked. Wotan leaves him, telling him that only that man can forge it, who never knew fear. Siegfried, finding the sword still in fragments when he returns, melts these in fire, and easily forges them together, to Mime's great awe, for he sees now that this boy is the one, whom the stranger has meant.

In the second scene we see the opening of

Fafner's cavern, where Alberich keeps watch for the dragon's slayer, so long predicted.

Wotan approaching, warns him that Alberich's brother Mime has brought up the boy, who is to slay Fafner, in the hope of gaining Alberich's ring, the wondrous qualities of which are unknown to Siegfried.

Wotan awakes Fafner, the dragon, telling him that his slayer is coming.

Mime, who has led Siegfried to this part of the forest under the pretext of teaching him fear, approaches now, and Siegfried, eager for combat, kills the dreadful worm. Accidentally tasting the blood, he all at once understands the language of the birds. They tell him to seek for the Tarnhelm and for the ring, which he finds in the cavern. Meanwhile the brothers, Alberich and Mime, quarrel over the treasure, which they hope to gain. When Siegfried returns with ring and helmet, he is again warned by the voice of a wood-bird, not to trust in Mime. Having tasted the dragon's blood, Siegfried is enabled to probe Mime's innermost thoughts, and so he learns that Mime means to poison him, in order to obtain the treasure. He then kills the traitor with a single stroke. — Stretching himself under the linden-tree to repose after that day's hard work, he again hears the voice of the wood-bird, which tells him of a glorious bride, sleeping on a rock surrounded by fire; and flying before him, the bird shows Siegfried the way to the spot.

In the third scene we find Wotan once more awakening Erda, to seek her counsel, as to how

best to avert the doom, which he sees coming, but she is less wise than he and so he decides to let fate have its course. When he sees Siegfried coming, he for the last time tries to oppose him, by barring the way to Brünnhilde, but the sword Nothung splits the god's spear. Seeing that his power avails him nothing he retires to Walhalla, there to await the „Dusk of the Gods."

Siegfried plunges through the fire, awakes the Walkyrie and after a long resistance, wins the proud virgin.

SILVANA.

Romantic opera in four acts by Weber.

Text by Ernest Pasqué.

This opera was left unfinished by Weber. It has however recently been completed, the text by Ernest Pasqué, and the music by Ferdinand Langer, who rearranged the manuscript with loving care, weaving in different compositions from Weber, as for instance his „Invitation à la valse", and his „Polonaise", which are dexterously introduced into the ballet of the second act.

The action is taken from an old German legend which comes to us from the land of the Rhine. There we may still find the ruins of the two castles Sternberg and Liebenstein.

Of these our legend says, that they belonged to two brothers, who hated each-other, for the one, Boland, loved his brother's bride and was refused by her. By way of revenge he slew his brother and burnt down his castle. But in this

fray the wife he coveted disappeared with her child and both were supposed to have perished in the flames.

Since then Boland has fallen into deep melancholy and the consequences of his dreadful deed have never ceased to torment him. His only son, who lost his mother in early childhood, has grown up solitary, knowing nothing of woman's sweetness, of peace and happiness. His only passion is the hunt. He has grown into manhood and his father as well as his vassals wish him to marry, but never yet has he found a woman, who has touched his heart with love.

In the beginning of the first act we see him hunting in the forest. He has lost his way and his companions and finds himself in a spot, he has never before seen. A maiden comes out of a little hut, fairer than any he has ever seen and both fall in love at first sight. The returning collier would fain keep his only child, who has not yet seen anything of the world; but the nymph of the forest, Silvana's protectrice, beckons him away. When at length the Count's fellow-hunters find him, he presents Silvana to them as his bride. The unfortunate collier is made drunk with wine, and during his sleep they take his daughter away to the castle of the old „Rhinegrave."

But Silvana is protected in the new world, into which she enters, by the nymph, who follows her in the guise of a young minstrel. The old Count, hearing of his son's resolution, is quite willing to receive the bride and even consents

to go to the peasant's festival, and look at the dancing and frolicking, given in honor of his son's bridal.

There we find Ratto, the collier, who seeks his daughter Silvana, telling everybody that robbers took her away from him, and beseeching help to discover her. Meanwhile Silvana arrives in rich and costly attire between Gerold, the young Count and the old Rhinegrave. The latter, attracted by her fairness and innocence has welcomed her as his daughter without asking for antecedents. When the dances of the villagers have ended, the nymph enters in the guise of a minstrel, asking to be allowed to sing to the hearers, as was the custom on the banks of the Rhine.

She begins her ballad, the contents of which terrify the Rhinegrave, for it is his own awful deed, which he hears. Springing up, he draws his sword against the minstrel, but Silvana rises, protecting him with outstretched arms. Everybody is stupified; Gerold looks with suspicion on his bride, hanging on the breast of the stranger. He asks for an explanation, but Silvana is silent. It is part of her trial, not to betray the nymph. At the same moment Ratto, the collier, recognizes and claims Silvana as his daughter. Everybody now looks with contempt on the low-born maiden, and the Rhinegrave commands them to be put into prison, but Gerold believing in his bride's innocence, though appearances are against her, entreats her once more to defend herself. Silvana only asserts her innocence and her love for Gerold, but will

give no proofs. So the collier with his daughter and the minstrel are taken to prison. But when the keeper opens the door in the morning, the minstrel has disappeared.

The old Count, disgusted at the idea of his son's union with a collier's daughter, accuses her of being a sorceress. He compels her to confess that she seduced his son by magic arts, and Silvana consents to say anything rather than injure her lover. — She is conducted before a court and condemned to the funeral pile. Gerold, not once doubting her, is resolved to share her death, when in the last critical moment the minstrel once more raises his voice and finishes the ballad, which the Rhinegrave had interrupted so violently. He tells the astonished hearers, that the wife and daughter of the Count, who was slain by his brother, were not burnt in the castle, but escaped to the forest, finding kindly refuge in a poor collier's hut where the mother died, leaving her child, Silvana, under his protection.

The Rhinegrave, full of remorse, embraces Silvana, beseeching her forgiveness, and the lovers are united.

LA SONNAMBULA.

Opera in two acts by Vincenzo Bellini.

Text by Felice Romani.

This opera is decidedly of the best of Bellini's muse. Though it does not reach the standard of Norma, its songs are so rich and melodious, that they seem to woo the ear and cannot be heard without pleasure.

Add to these advantages a really fine as well as touching libretto, and it may be easily understood, why the opera has not yet disappeared from the stage repertory, though composed more than fifty years ago.

It is a simple village-peasant story, which we have to relate. The scene of action is a village in Switzerland, where the rich farmer Elvino has married a poor orphan, Amina. The ceremony has taken place at the magistrate's, and Elvino is about to obtain the sanction of the church to his union, when the owner of the castle, Count Rudolph, who fled from home in his boyhood, returns most unexpectedly and, at once making love to Amina, excites the bridegroom's jealousy. Lisa, the young owner of a little inn, who wants Elvino for herself and disdains the devotion of Alexis, a simple peasant, tries to avenge herself on her happy rival. Lisa is a coquette and flirts with the Count, whom the judge recognizes. While she yet prates with him, the door opens and Amina enters, walking in her sleep and calling for Elvina. Lisa conceals herself, but forgets her handkerchief. The Count, seeing Amina's condition and awed by her purity quits the room, where Amina lies down, always in deep sleep. Just then the people, having heard of the Count's arrival, come to greet him and find Amina instead. At the same moment Elvino summoned by Lisa rushes in; and finding his bride in the Count's room, turns away from her in disdain, snatching his wedding-ring from her finger in his wrath, and utterly disbelieving Amina's protestations

of innocence and the Count's assurances. Lisa succeeds in attracting Elvino's notice and he promises to marry her.

The Count once more tries to persuade the angry bridegroom of his bride's innocence, but without result, when Teresa, Amina's foster-mother, shows Lisa's handkerchief, which was found in the Count's room. Lisa reddens, and Elvino knows not whom he shall believe, when all of a sudden Amina is seen, emerging from a window of the mill, walking in a trance, and calling for her bridegroom in most touching accents.

All are convinced of her innocence, when they see her in this state of somnambulism, in which she crosses a very narrow bridge without falling.

Elvino himself replaces the wedding-ring on her finger, and she awakes from her trance in his arms. Everybody is happy at the turn which things have taken; Elvino asks Amina's forgiveness and leaves Lisa to her own bitter reflections.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

Comic opera in four acts by Hermann Goetz.

Text done after Shakespeare's comedy by J. V. Widmann.

This beautiful opera is the only one, which the gifted young composer left complete, for he died of consumption in his early manhood. His death is all the more to be lamented, as this composition shows a talent, capable of performances far above the average. Its melodies are very fresh and winning, and above all original.

As the subject of the libretto is so generally known, it is not necessary to do more than shortly epitomise here. Of the libretto itself however it may be remarked in passing, that it is uncommonly well done; it is in rhymes which are harmonious and well turned. The translation is quite free and independent, but the sense and the course of action are the same, though somewhat shortened and modified, so that we only find the chief of the persons, we so well know.

Kate is the same headstrong young lady, though she does not appear in a very bad light, her wilfulness being the result of maidenly pride, which is ashamed to appear weak before the stronger sex. She finds her master in Petrucchio however and after a hard and bitter fight with her feelings, she at last avows herself conquered, less by her husband's indomitable will, than by her love for him, which acknowledges him as her best friend and protector.

Then her trials are at an end, and when her sister Bianca with her young husband Lucentio and her father Baptista, visit her, they are witnesses of the perfect harmony and peace which reign in Kate's home.

Aug 5-91-Dresden-1890

TANNHÄUSER.

Romantic opera in three acts by Richard Wagner.

With this opera begins a new era in the history of the German theatre. Tannhäuser is more a drama than an opera, every expression in it is highly dramatic; the management of the orchestra

too is quite different from anything hitherto experienced, it dominates everywhere, the voice of the performer being often only an accompaniment to it. Tannhäuser is the first opera, or as Wagner himself called it, drama of this kind, and written after this one all Wagner's works bear the same stamp.

Wagner took his subject from an old legend, which tells of a minstrel, called Tannhäuser, (probably identical with Heinrich von Ofterdingen) who won all prizes by his beautiful songs and all hearts by his noble bearing. So the palm is allotted to him at the yearly „tournament of minstrels" on the Wartburg, and his reward is to be the hand of Elisabeth, niece of the Landgrave of Thuringia, whom he loves. But instead of behaving sensibly, this erring knight suddenly disappears nobody knows where, leaving his bride in sorrow and anguish. He falls into the hands of Venus, who holds court in the Hörselberg near Eisenach, and Tannhäuser, at the opening of the first scene, has already passed a whole year with her. At length he has grown tired of sensual love and pleasure, and notwithstanding Venus' allurements he leaves her, vowing never to return to the goddess, but to expiate his sins by a holy life. He returns to the charming vale behind the Wartburg, he hears again the singing of the birds, the shepherds playing on the flute, the pious songs of the pilgrims on their way to Rome. Full of repentance he kneels down and prays, when suddenly the Landgrave appears with some minstrels, amongst

them Wolfram von Eschinbach, Tannhäuser's best friend. They greet their long-lost companion, who however cannot tell, where he has been all the time, and as Wolfram reminds him of Elisabeth, Tannhäuser returns with the party to the Wartburg.

It is just the anniversary of the tournament of minstrels, and in the second act we find Elisabeth with Tannhäuser, who craves her pardon and is warmly welcomed by her. The high prize for the best song is again to be Elisabeth's hand, and Tannhäuser resolves to win her once more. The Landgrave chooses „love" as the subject, whose nature is to be explained by the minstrels. Everyone is called by name, and Wolfram von Eschinbach begins, praising love as a well, deep and pure, a source of the highest and most sacred feeling. Others follow; Walther von der Vogelweide praises the virtue of love, every minstrel celebrates spiritual love alone.

But Tannhäuser, who has been in Venus' fetters, sings of another love, warmer and more passionate, but sensual. And when the others remonstrate, he loudly praises Venus, the goddess of earthly love. All stand aghast; they recognize now, where he has been so long, he is about to be put to death, when Elisabeth prays for him. She loves him dearly and hopes to save his soul from eternal damnation. Tannhäuser is to join a party of pilgrims on their way to Rome, there to crave for the Pope's pardon.

In the third act we see the pilgrims return from their journey. Elisabeth anxiously expects her lover's return, but he is not among them. —

Fervently she prays to the Holy Virgin: but not that the faithful lover may be given back to her, no, rather that he may be pardoned and his immortal soul saved. Wolfram is beside her, he loves the maiden, but he has no thought for himself, he only thinks of her, whose life he sees ebbing swiftly away, and of his unhappy friend.

Presently when Elisabeth is gone, Tannhäuser comes up in pilgrim's garb. He has a hard journey behind him, full of sacrifices and castigations, and all for nought, for the Pope has rejected him. He has been told in hard words, that he is for ever damned, and will as little get deliverance from his grievous sin, as the stick in his hand will ever bear fresh green leaves.

Full of despair Tannhäuser is returning to seek Venus, whose Siren songs already fall alluringly on his ear. Wolfram entreats him to fly, and when Tannhäuser fails to listen, he utters Elisabeth's name. At this moment a procession descends from the Wartburg, chanting a funeral song over an open bier. Elisabeth lies on it dead, and Tannhäuser sinks on his knee beside her, crying: „Holy Elisabeth, pray for me." Then Venus disappears, and all at once the withered stick begins to bud and blossom, and Tannhäuser, pardoned, expires at the side of his bride.

GUGLIELMO TELL.

Grand opera in three acts by Rossini.

This last opera of Rossini's is his most perfect work and it is deeply to be regretted, that when

it appeared, he left the dramatic world, to live in comfortable retirement for 39 years. How much he could still have done, if he had chosen! In Tell his genius attains its full depth, here alone we find the highly dramatic element united to the infinite richness of melody, which we have learned to associate with his name and work.

The text is founded on the well-known story of Tell, who delivered his Fatherland from one of its most cruel despots, the Austrian governor Gessler.

The first act opens with a charming introductory chorus by peasants, who are celebrating a nuptial fête.

Tell joins in their pleasure, though he cannot help giving utterance to the pain which the Austrian tyranny causes him. Arnold von Melchthal, son of an old Swiss, has conceived an unhappy passion for Mathilda, Princess of Habsburg, whose life he once saved; but he is Swiss and resolved to be true to his country. He promises Tell to join in his efforts to liberate it. Meanwhile Leuthold, a Swiss peasant, comes up. He is a fugitive, having killed an Austrian soldier, to revenge an intended abduction of his daughter. His only safety lies in crossing the lake, but no fisherman dares to row out in the face of the coming storm. Tell steps forth, and seizing the oars, brings Leuthold safely to the opposite shore. When Rudolf von Harras appears with his soldiers, his prey has escaped and, nobody being willing to betray the deliverer, old father Melchthal is imprisoned.

In the second act we find the Princess Mathilda returning from a hunt. She meets Arnold, and they betray their mutual passion. Arnold does not yet know his father's fate, but presently Tell enters with Walter Fürst, who informs Arnold that his father has fallen a victim to the Austrian tyranny. Arnold, cruelly roused from his love-dream, awakes to duty, and the three men swear bloody vengeance. This is the famous oath taken on the Rütli. The deputies of the three Cantons arrive, one after the other, and Tell makes them take an oath to establish Switzerland's independence. Excited by Arnold's dreadful account of his father's murder, they all unite in the fierce cry: „To arms!" which is to be their signal of combat.

In the third act Gessler arrives at the marketplace of Altdorf, where he has placed his hat on a pole, to be greeted instead of himself by the Swiss.

They grumble at this new proof of arrogance, but without daring to disobey the order, till Tell, passing by with his son Gemmy, disregards it. Refusing to salute the hat, he is instantly taken and commanded by Gessler, to shoot an apple off his little boy's head. After a dreadful inward struggle Tell submits. Fervently praying to God and embracing his fearless son, he shoots with steady hand, hitting the apple right in the centre. But Gessler has seen a second arrow, which Tell has hidden in his breast, and he asks its purpose. Tell freely confesses, that he would have shot the tyrant, had he missed his aim. Tell is fettered,

Mathilda vainly appealing for mercy. But Gessler's time has come. The Swiss begin to revolt. Mathilda herself begs to be admitted into their alliance of free citizens and offers her hand to Arnold. The fortresses of the oppressors fall, Tell enters free and victorious, having himself killed Gessler, and in a chorus at once majestic and grand the Swiss celebrate the day of their liberation.

THE TEMPLAR AND THE JEWESS.

Opera in three acts by Henry Marschner.

Text by W. A. Wohlbrück.

The subject of this opera is the well-known romance of Ivanhoe by Sir Walter Scott. The poet understood pretty well how to make an effective picture with his somewhat too extensive and imposing material.

Its chief defect lies in the conclusion, which is lacking in poetic justice and cannot be considered satisfactory, for the heroine Rebecca who loves her knightly succourer Ivanhoe, is only pitied by him, and so the difficulty of the situation is not solved to our liking. Apart from this defect, the opera is most interesting and we are won by its beautiful music, which may be called essentially chivalrous and therefore particularly adapted to the romantic text.

In the opening scene we are introduced to the Knight-Templar, Brian de Bois Guilbert, who has fallen in love with the beautiful Jewess Rebecca, and has succeeded in capturing and detaining her in his castle. At the same time Sir Cedric of Rotherwood, a Saxon knight, (father of Ivanhoe,

whom he has disinherited), has been taken captive with his ward, the lady Rowena, by their enemies, the Normans. — Rebecca refuses to hear the Templar's protestations of love, and threatens to precipitate herself from the parapet, if he dares to touch her. Her wild energy conquers; and when he leaves her, Ivanhoe, the wounded knight to whom Rebecca is assigned as nurse, appears, and tells her that friends have come to deliver them all.

The outlaws, commanded by Richard Coeur de Lion, under the guise of the Black Knight, assault the castle, burn it and deliver the captives. Poor Rebecca alone falls into the hands of the Templar, who does not cease to press his love-suit. Brian's deed soon becomes known, and his brother-Templars, believing Brian to be innocent, but seduced by a sorceress, condemn Rebecca to the stake. She makes use of her right to ask for a champion, and is allowed till sunset to find one. Brian himself tries all he can to save her, but she rejects his aid, for she loves Ivanhoe, though she is well aware that this noble knight loves his beautiful cousin Rowena.

The day has nearly passed, the funeral pile awaits its victim, and still no champion appears. The trumpets are sounding for the last time, when Ivanhoe appears to fight Brian, whom the Templars have appointed as his adversary. Ivanhoe is victorious; Brian falls lifeless, even before the enemy's sword touches him. Everybody recognizes the judgment of God and Rebecca is given back to her desolate father. At the last moment King

Richard, who has long been absent on a crusade to Jerusalem, appears on the scene. He announces that henceforth he alone will govern the land and punish all injustice. Ivanhoe and Rowena are united by consent of Sir Cedric, who is now wholly reconciled to his valorous son.

LA TRAVIATA (OR VIOLETTA).

Opera in three acts by Verdi.

Text taken from the French by Piave.

The original of the libretto is Dumas' celebrated novel „la dame aux camélias".

The opera is like all of Verdi's works full of melody and there are numberless special beauties in it. The prelude which opens the opera instead of an overture, is in particular an elegy of a noble and interesting kind. But as the text is frivolous and sensual, of course the music cannot be expected to be wholly free from these characteristics.

The scene is laid in and near Paris. Alfred Germont is passionately in love with Violetta Valery, one of the most frivolous beauties in Paris. She is pleased with his sincere passion, anything like which she has never hitherto known, and openly telling him, who she is, she warns him herself; but he loves her all the more, and as she returns his passion, she abandons her gay life and follows him into the country, where they live very happily for some months.

Annina, Violetta's maid dropping a hint to Alfred that her mistress is about to sell her house

and carriage in town in order to avoid expenses, he departs for the Capital to prevent this.

During his absence Violetta receives a visit from Alfred's father, who tries to show her, that she has destroyed not only his family's but his son's happiness by suffering Afred to unite himself to one so dishonored as herself. He succeeds in convincing her, and, broken-hearted, she determines to sacrifice herself and leave Alfred secretly. Ignoring the possible reason for this inexplicable action, Alfred is full of wrath and resolves to take vengeance. He finds Violetta in the house of a former friend, Flora Bervoix, who is in a position similar to that of Violetta. — The latter, having no other resources and feeling herself at death's door (a state of health suggested in the first act by an attack of suffocation) has returned to her former life.

Alfred insults her publicly. The result is a duel between her present adorer, Baron Dauphal and Alfred.

From this time on Violetta declines rapidly, and in the last act, which takes place in her sleeping-room, we find her dying. Hearing that Alfred has been victorious in the duel, and receiving a letter from his father, who is now willing to pardon and to receive her as his daughter-in-law, she revives to some extent and Alfred, who at last hears of her sacrifice, returns to her, but only to afford a last glimpse of happiness to the unfortunate woman, who expires, a modern Magdalen, full of repentance, and striving tenderly to console her lover and his now equally desolate father.

TRISTAN AND ISOLDA.

Lyric drama in three acts by Richard Wagner.

The music to this drama is deemed by connoisseurs the most perfect, ever written by Wagner, but it needs a fine aud highly cultivated understanding of music to take in all its beauty and greatness. There is little action in it, and very often the orchestra has the principal part, so that the voice seems little more than an accompaniment; it has musical measures too, which cannot be digested by an uneducated hearer; but nevertheless many parts of it will interest every-one.

Isolda's love-song for instance is the noblest hymn, ever sung in praise of this passion.

The first act represents the deck of a ship, where we find the two principal persons, Tristan and Isolda together, — Tristan, a Cornish hero, has gone over to Ireland, to woo the Princess for his old uncle, King Marke. Isolda however loves Tristan and has loved him from the time when he was cast sick and dying on the coast of Ireland and was rescued and nursed by her, though he was her enemy. But Tristan, having sworn faith to his uncle, never looks at her, and she full of wrath that he woos her for another instead of for himself, attempts to poison herself and him by a potion. But Brangäna, her faithful attendant secretly changes the poisoned draught for a love-potion, so that they are inevitably joined in passionate love. Only when the ship gets ashore, its deck already covered with knights and sailors, who come to greet their King's

bride, does Brangäna confess her fraud, and Isolda, hearing that she is to live, faints in her attendant's arms.

In the second act Isolda has been wedded to Marke, but the love-potion has worked well, and she has secret interviews at night with Tristan, whose sense of honor is deadened by the fatal draught. Brangäna keeps watch for the lovers, but King Marke's jealous friend Melot betrays them, and they are found out by the good old King, who returns earlier than he had intended from a hunt.

Tristan is profoundly touched by the grief of the King, whose sadness at losing faith in his most noble warrior is greater, than his wrath against the betrayer of his honor. Tristan, unable to defend himself, turns to Isolda, asking her to follow him into the desert, but Melot opposes him, and they fight, Tristan falling back deadly wounded into his faithful servant Kurvenal's arms.

The third act represents Tristan's home in Brittany, whither Kurvenal has carried his wounded master in order to nurse him. Isolda, so skilled in the art of healing wounds, has been sent for, but they look in vain for the ship, which is to bring her.

When at last it comes into sight, Tristan, who awakes from a long swoon, sends Kurvenal away, to receive his mistress, and as they both delay their coming, his impatient longing gets the better of him. Forgetting his wound, he rises from his couch, tearing away the bandages, and

so Isolda is only just in time to catch him in her arms, where he expires with her name on his lips. While she bewails her loss, another ship is announced by the shepherd's horn. King Marke arrives, prepared to pardon all and to unite the lovers. Kurvenal, seeing Melot advance, mistakes them for foes and running his sword through Melot's breast, sinks, himself deadly wounded, at his master's feet. King Marke, to whom Brangäna has confessed her part in the whole matter, vainly laments his friend Tristan, while Isolda, waking from her swoon and seeing her lover dead, pours forth rapturous words of greeting, and, broken-hearted, sinks down dead at his side.

IL TROVATORE.

Opera in four acts by Giuseppe Verdi.
Text by Salvatore Commerano.

Though Verdi is far beneath his celebrated predecessors Rossini and Bellini, he is highly appreciated in his own country and the Trovatore counts many admirers not only in Italy but also abroad. This is easily accounted for by the number of simple and catching melodies contained in his works, and which have become so quickly popular, that we hear them on every street-organ. Manrico's romance for example, is a good specimen of the work for which he is admired.

The text of Il Trovatore is very gloomy and distressing.

Two men of entirely different station and character woo Leonore, Countess of Sergasto. The

one is Count Luna, the other a minstrel, named Manrico, who is believed to be the son of Azucena, a gipsy.

Azucena has in accordance with gipsy-law vowed bloody revenge on Count Luna, because his father, believing her mother to be a sorceress and to have bewitched one of his children, had the old woman burnt. To punish the father for this cruelty Azucena took away his other child, which was vainly sought for. — This story is told in the first scene, where we find the Count's servants waiting for him, while he stands sighing beneath his sweetheart's window. But Leonore's heart is already captivated by Manrico's sweet songs and his valour in tournament. She suddenly hears his voice, and in the darkness mistakes the Count for her lover, who however comes up just in time to claim her. The Count is full of rage, and there follows a duel in which Manrico is wounded, but though it is in his power to kill his enemy, he spares his life, without however being able to account for the impulse.

In the second act Azucena, nursing Manrico, tells him of her mother's dreadful fate, and her last cry for revenge, and confesses to having robbed the old Count's son, with the intention of burning him. But in her despair and confusion, she says, she threw her own child into the flames, and the Count's son lived. Manrico is terrified, but Azucena retracts her words and regains his confidence, so that he believes her tale to have been but an outburst of remorse and folly.

Meanwhile he hears, that Leonore, to whom he was reported as dead, is about to take the veil, and he rushes away to save her. Count Luna arrives before the convent with the same purpose. But just as he seizes his prey, Manrico comes up, and liberates her with the aid of his companions, while the Count curses them.

Leonore becomes Manrico's wife, but her happiness is shortlived.

In the third act the Count's soldiers succeed in capturing Azucena, in whom they recognize the burnt gipsy's daughter. She denies all knowledge of the Count's lost brother, and as the Count hears that his successful rival is her son, she is condemned to be burnt. Ruiz, Manrico's friend, brings the news to him. Manrico tries to rescue her, but is seized too, and condemned to die by the axe.

In the fourth act Leonore offers herself to the Count as the price of freedom for the captives, but determined to be true to her lover, she takes poison. She hastens to him, announcing his deliverance. Too late he sees how dearly she has paid for it, when after sweet assurances of love and fidelity she sinks dead at his feet.

The Count, coming up and seeing himself deceived, orders Manrico to be put to death instantly.

He is led away, and only after the execution does Azucena inform the Count, that his murdered rival was Luna's own long-sought brother.

"La Miserere" from this opera, I heard Patti sing in London, and it was grand.

DER TROMPETER VON SÄKKINGEN.

(THE TRUMPETER OF SAEKKINGEN).

Opera in three acts with a prelude by Victor Nessler.
Text by Rudolf Bunge after Scheffel's poem.

Seldom in our day is an opera such a complete success in all German theatres, as this composition of Nessler's has proved to be. To tell the truth, it owes its popularity in great degree to the libretto, which has taken so many fine songs and ideas from its universally known and adored original. Nessler's Trompeter is however in every way inferior to Scheffel's celebrated poem.

Nevertheless the music though not very profound is pleasing, and there are even some airs in it which have already become popular.

The prelude opens at Heidelberg, where a chorus of students make a great noise after one of their drinking-bouts. They presently serenade the Princess-Electress, and a law-student, named Werner, a foundling and the adopted son of a professor, distinguishes himself by a solo on the trumpet. He is heard by the trumpeter of the Imperial recruiting officers, who tries to win him, but without success, when suddenly the Rector Magnificus appears, to assist the major-domo, and announces to the astounded disturbers of peace, that they are dismissed from the university.

Werner, taking a sudden resolution, accepts the press-money from Konradin the trumpeter, marches away with the soldiers, and the prelude is closed.

The first act represents a scene at Säkkingen on the Rhine. There is a festival in honor of St. Fridolin, at which young Baroness Maria assists. She is insulted by the peasants and Werner protects her from them. She is much pleased by the noble bearing of the trumpeter, and so is her aunt, the Countess of Wildenstein, who detects a great resemblance between him and her son, who was stolen by gipsies in his childhood. — The second scene takes us into the Baron's room, where we find the gouty old gentleman in rather a bad humor. He is restored to good temper by a letter from his friend, the Count of Wildenstein, who lives separated from his first wife, the above mentioned Countess, and who proposes his son, born in second wedlock, as Maria's husband.

The Baron receives Maria kindly, when she relates her adventure and begs him to engage Werner as trumpeter in the castle. At this moment the latter is heard blowing his instrument and the Baron, who has a great predilection for it, bids Werner present himself, and at once engages him.

In the second act Werner gives lessons on the trumpet to the lovely Maria; of course the young people fall in love with each other, but the Countess watches them, until friend Konradin for once succeeds in drawing her aside, when there follows a glowing declaration of love on both sides. Unhappily it is interrupted by the Countess, who announces her discovery to the Baron. Meanwhile the destined bridegroom has arrived with his father. Damian, that is the young man's name, is a simple-

ton, and Maria declares at once that she never will be his. But in the presence of the whole company, assembled for a festival, the Baron proclaims Maria Count Damian's bride; to the over-bold Werner he forbids the castle.

The last act opens with a siege of the castle by the rebellious peasants. Damian shows himself a coward. In the last extremity they are relieved by Werner, who drives the peasants back with his soldiers. He is wounded in the battle, and while the wound is being dressed, a mole detected on his arm proclaims him the stolen child of Countess Wildenstein. All now ends in joy and happiness; the Baron is willing enough to give his daughter to the brave young nobleman and very glad to be rid of the cowardly Damian.

UNDINE.

Romantic opera in four acts by Albert Lortzing.

Text after Fouquet's tale.

With this opera Lortzing for the first time tried his genius in another field. Until then he had only composed comic operas, which had met with a very fair measure of success, but in this opera he left the comic for the romantic and was peculiarly happy both in his ideas and choice of subject which, as it happened, had previously had the honor of being taken up by Weber. The first representation of Undine at Hamburg in the year 1845 was one of the few luminous moments in Lortzing's dark life.

His melodies are wonderfully captivating and

lovely, and the whole charm of German romance lies in them.

The contents of the libretto are:

The gallant Knight, Hugo von Ringstetten has been ordered by the Duke's daughter, Berthalda, to go in search of adventures, accompanied by his attendant Veit. Being detained for three months in a little village cut off from communication with the outer world by an inundation, he sees Undine, the adopted daughter of an old fisherman, named Tobias, and falling in love with her he asks for her hand. In the first act we see the priest uniting the young pair. The Knight recognizes in the old man a traveler, whom he once saved from robbers, and is glad to see him. Undine behaves most childishly and finally says that she has no soul. She is herself grieved, and the others do not believe her. Hugo now tells them of the proud and beautiful Berthalda, whose scarf he received in a tournament, and who sent him away on this adventure. He then returns to the Capital with his young wife, in order to present her at the Ducal court. Meanwhile Veit has met Kühleborn, the mighty King of the water-fairies, and is asked by him, whether his master has quite forgotten Berthalda. The valet gives as his opinion that the poor fisher-maiden is deceived, and will soon be abandoned by her husband. This excites Kühleborn's wrath, for Undine is his daughter, and he forwith resolves to protect her.

In the second act Undine confesses to her husband, that she is a water-fairy, one of those, whom

men call „Undinas“. They have no soul, but if they are loved faithfully by man, they are able to gain a soul and through it immortality. Though he shudders inwardly, Undine's purity and loveliness conquer Hugo's fright, and he once more swears to be eternally true to her.

The proud Berthalda, who loves Hugo, has heard with feelings of mingled anger and despair of the knight's marriage. She determines to honor the King of Naples with her hand; but before her wedding takes place, a sealed document has to be opened, which says that Berthalda, instead of being a Duke's daughter, is a poor foundling. Kühleborn, who is present, declares that she is the real child of Undine's foster-parents. Berthalda is now obliged to leave the palace. She loathes her fate and curses her low-born parents. Then Kühleborn derides her and the attendants are about to seize him, in order to turn him out-of-doors, when the statue of the water-god breaks into fragments, while Kühleborn stands in its place, the waters pouring down upon him. All take flight, but Undine raises the prostrate Berthalda, promising her protection in her husband's castle.

In the third act, Berthalda succeeds in again drawing Hugo into her nets. Though warned by the waterfairies not to perjure himself, he neglects their advice and Undine finds him in the arms of her rival. He repels his wife, and Kühleborn takes her back into his watery kingdom. But Undine has lost her peace of mind for ever, she cannot forget her husband.

In the fourth act Hugo has given orders to close the well with stones, to prevent all possible communication with the water-fairies. Undine's pale face pursues him everywhere, he continually fancies he hears her soft voice and touching entreaties and to stifle his remorse he appoints the day of his wedding with Berthalda.

His attendant Veit, however, unable to forget his sweet mistress, removes the stones, which cover the well, Undine rises from it and appears at midnight at the wedding. Hugo, forgetting Berthalda, and drawn towards his lovely wife against his will, falls into her arms and dies at her feet. The castle comes crashing down, floods penetrate everywhere, and carry Hugo and Undine into Kühleborn's crystal palace.

Undine obtains pardon for Hugo, and his only punishment is that he must forever stay with his wife in her watery kingdom.

URVASI.

Opera in three acts by Wilhelm Kienzl.

Text after the Indian legend of Kalidasa.

This opera is so brilliantly supplemented by decorations and poetic enchantment of every kind, that it would be worth while to see those triumphs of modern machinery alone. But not only on account of external effect is Urvasi admired, the music is in itself well worth hearing, though it contains many reminiscences of other well-known composers. It is pleasing and graceful, and the orchestration is so brilliant, that it may

even deceive the hearer as to the poverty of invention.

The subject, arranged by Kienzl himself, is highly romantic.

The Apsares, (virgins of heaven), who are sometimes allowed to visit earth and its inhabitants, have just made use of this permission.

Urvasi, their Princess, isolates herself from their dances and is with two sisters caught by the wild Prince of the Asures, their enemy. They cry for help, when the King of Persia, hunting in those grounds, appears with his suite and saves Urvasi.

They fall in love with each other, though Brahma has prophesied to the king, that he will die poor and unknown, if he does not wed the last Princess of the Persian kingdom Ausinari, to whom he is already betrothed.

Urvasi tells him, that not being a daughter of earth, she can only be allowed to see him from time to time. The King swears eternal faith to her; and she in return promises to be his in heaven. But should he prove false, nothing can save them both from fearful punishment.

Then she bids him farewell, promising to send a rose every time she is allowed to descend from heaven.

In the second act Ausinari, walking in the moonshine, mourns for the King's love which she has lost. Mandava, priest of the moon, consoles her, designing the present night, that of the full-moon, as the one, in which the King's heart shall again turn to her.

After his departure Ausinari first prays to the good and mild god of the moon, but afterwards invokes Ahriman, the Spirit of Night, lest the moon-god should prove too weak. When she has left the park, the King walks in dreamily. His whole soul is filled by Urvasi; he fervently calls for her, and a rose, her love-token, falls at his feet. But he waits in vain for her appearing, she does not come and as the priests of the moon appear, to celebrate the festival of their god, he retires into a bower.

Now follows a sort of ballet. All the maidens and their lovers, who desire to be united, sacrifice to the god; the young men throw a blooming rose into the flame, the girls a palm-branch.

Ausinari appears and is greeted with joyous acclamations, while Manava enters the bower to conduct the King to the sacrifice. He vainly strives against Ausinari and the priests, who urgently demand the sacrifice of the red rose, which he still carries in his hand. After a long resistance, he abandons himself to despair and throws the rose into the flame, thinking himself forsaken by Urvasi. But hardly has he done so, than Urvasi's form rises from the flame, solemnly reminding him of the oath which he has broken. She has only been testing his firmness and finding him weak, she is obliged to disappear forever as Urvasi, and to live in another form, while only deepest contrition and ardent love can ever help him to find her again. Urvasi vanishes, and the King leaves Ausinari, his throne, and his land, to seek for his beloved as a poor pilgrim.

In the last act we find Urvasi's friend, the Apsare Tschitralekha, watering a rose-bush, into which her Princess has been transformed.

The King enters in the garb of an Indian penitent. His strength is nearly exhausted, he has sought his bride all over the earth, and he now demands her from the spirit of the rock, and from that of the cataract, but all tell him, that she is only to find where glowing life grows. Tired to death, he draws his sword to end his life, when Tschitralekha laying her hand on his arm, points out the rose-bush. The King kisses it, and falling on his knee beside the virgin who joins in his devotions, fervently prays to Indra, that at last his love may be given to him again. Slowly Urvasi rises from the rose-bush. A long and exalted love-duet follows, then the Indian heaven opens and the King dies at Urvasi's feet, struck by a ray from the celestial sun.

THE VAMPIRE.

Romantic opera in two acts by Heinrich Marschner.
Text by W. A. Wohlbrück.

This opera had long fallen into oblivion, when Hofrath Schuch of Dresden was struck with the happy idea of resuscitating it. And indeed its music well deserves to be heard. It is both beautiful and characteristic and particularly the drinking-scenes in the second act, the soft and graceful airs sung by Emma and Edgar Aubry belong to the best of Marschner's work. He is, it is true, not quite original and often reminds one of Weber,

but that cannot well be called a fault, almost every genius having greater prototype. This opera was so long neglected on account of its libretto, the subject of which is not only unusual, but far too romantic and ghastly for modern taste. It is taken from Lord Byron's tale of the same name and written by Marschner's own brother-in-law. The scene is laid in Scotland in the seventeenth century and illustrates the old Scottish legend of the Vampire, a phantom-monster which can only exist by sucking the heart-blood of sleeping mortals.

Lord Ruthven is such a Vampire. He victimizes young maidens in particular. His soul is sold to Satan, but the demons have granted him a respite of a year, on condition of his bringing them three brides young and pure. His first victim is Janthe, daughter of Sir John Berkley. She loves the monster and together they disappear into a cavern. Her father gathers his followers together and goes in search of her. They hear dreadful wailings, followed by mocking laughter proceeding from the ill-fated Vampire, and entering they find Janthe lifeless. The despairing father stabs Ruthven, who wounded to death knows, that he cannot survive but by drawing life from the rays of the moon, which shines on the mountains. Unable to move, he is saved by Edgar Aubry, a relative to the Laird of Davenant, who accidentally comes to the spot.

Lord Ruthven, after having received a promise of secresy from Aubry, tells him who he is, and implores him to carry him to the hills as the last favor to a dying man.

Aubry complies with the Vampire's request and then hastily flies from the spot. Ruthven revives and follows him, in order to win the love of Malwina, daughter of the Laird of Davenant and Aubry's betrothed.

His respite now being short, he tries at the same time to gain the affections of John Perth's, the steward's daughter Emma.

Malwina meanwhile greets her beloved Aubry, who has returned after a long absence. Both are full of joy, when Malwina's father enters to announce to his daughter her future husband, whom he has chosen in the person of the Earl of Marsden. Great is Malwina's sorrow, and she now for the first time dares to tell her father, that her heart has already spoken and to present Aubry to him. The Laird's pride however does not allow him to retract his word, and when the Earl of Marsden arrives, he presents him to his daughter. In the supposed Earl, Aubry at once recognizes Lord Ruthven, but the villain stoutly denies his identity, giving Lord Ruthven out as a brother, who has been travelling for a long time. Aubry however recognizes the Vampire by a scar on his hand, but he is bound to secresy by his oath, and so Ruthven triumphs, having the Laird of Davenant's promise that he will be betrothed before midnight to Malwina, as he declares that he is bound to depart for Madrid the following morning as Ambassador.

In the second act all are drinking and frolicking on the green, where the bridal is to take place.

Emma awaits her lover George Dibdin, who is in Davenant's service. While she sings the ghastly romance of the Vampire, Lord Ruthven approaches, and by his sweet flattery and promise to help the lovers, he easily causes the simple maiden to grant him a kiss in token of her gratitude. In giving this kiss she is forfeited to the Evil One. George, who has seen all, is very jealous, though Emma tells him, that the future son-in-law of the Laird of Davenant will make him his Steward.

Meanwhile Aubry vainly tries to make Ruthven renounce Malwina. Ruthven threatens, that Aubry himself will be condemned to be a Vampire, if he breaks his oath, and depicts in glowing colors the torments of a spirit so cursed. While Aubry hesitates as to what he shall do, Ruthven once more approaches Emma and succeeds in winning her consent to follow him to his den, where he murders her.

In the last scene Malwina, unable any longer to resist her father's will, has consented to the hateful marriage. Ruthven has kept away rather long, and comes very late to his wedding. Aubry implores them to wait for the coming day, but in vain. Then he forgets his own danger and only sees that of his beloved, and when Ruthven is leading the bride to the altar, he loudly proclaims Ruthven to be a Vampire. At this moment a thunder-peal is heard and a flash of lightning destroys Ruthven, whose time of respite has ended at midnight. The old Laird, witnessing Heaven's punishment, bewails his error and gladly gives Mal-

wina to her lover, while all praise the Almighty, who has turned evil into good.

THE WALKYRIE.

First day of the Nibelungen Ring by Wagner.

In the first scene we are introduced into the dwelling of a mighty warrior, Hunding, in whose house Siegmund, a son of Wotan and of an earthly woman, has sought refuge, without knowing that it is the abode of an enemy. Sieglinda, Hunding's wife, who, standing alone and abandoned in the world, was forced into this union against her will, attracts the guest's interest and wins his love.

When Hunding comes home from the fight, he learns to his disgust, that his guest is the same warrior, who killed his kinsmen and whom they vainly pursued. The laws of hospitality forbid him to attack Siegmund under his own roof, but he warns him, that he shall only await the morrow to fight him.

Sieglinda, having fallen in love with her guest, mixes a powder with her husband's potion, which sends him into profound sleep. Then she returns to her guest, to whom she shows the hilt of the sword, which is thrust deep into the mighty ash-tree's stem, which fills the middle room of the hut. It has been put there by an unknown one-eyed wanderer, (Wotan, who once sacrificed one of his eyes to Erda, wishing to gain more knowledge for the sake of mankind). No hero has succeeded until now, in loosening the wondrous steel. Siegmund reveals to Sieglinda, that he is a son of the

„Waelsung" and they recognize that they are twin brother and sister. Then Sieglinda knows, that the sword is destined for Siegmund by his father, and Siegmund, with one mighty effort draws it out of the ash-tree. Sieglinda elopes with him and the early morning finds them in a rocky pass, flying before Hunding's wrath.

In the second scene we see Wotan, giving directions to the Walkyrie Brünnhilde, who is to shield Siegmund in his battle with Hunding. Brünnhilde is Wotan's and Erda's child and her father's favorite. But Fricka comes up, remonstrating violently against this breach of all moral and matrimonial laws; she is the protector of marriages and most jealous of her somewhat fickle husband, and she forces Wotan to withdraw his protection from Siegmund and to remove the power of Siegmund's sword.

Wotan recalls Brünnhilde, changing his orders with heavy heart and sending her forth to tell Siegmund his doom. She obeys, but Siegmund scorns all her fine promises of Walhalla. Though he is to find his father there, and everything besides that he could wish, he prefers foregoing all this happiness, when he hears that Sieglinda, who has been rendered inanimate by grief and terror, cannot follow him, but must go down to Hel after her death, where the shadows lead a sad and gloomy existence. — He wins Brünnhilde by his love and noble courage, and she for the first time resolves to disobey Wotan's orders given so unwillingly, and to help Siegmund against his foe.

Now ensues the combat with Hunding, Brünnhilde standing on Siegmund's side. But Wotan interferes, breaking Siegmund's sword; he falls, and Wotan kills Hunding too by one wrathful glance.

Then he turns his anger against the Walkyrie, who dared to disobey his commands and Brünnhilde flies before him, taking Sieglinda on her swift horse Grane, which bears both through the clouds.

In the third scene we find the Walkyries, arriving through the clouds on horseback one after the other. Every-one has a hero, lying before her in the saddle. It is their office to carry these into Walhalla, while the faint-hearted, or those of mankind, not happy enough to fall in battle, are doomed to go to Hel after their death.

There are eight Walkyries without Brünnhilde, who arrives last with Sieglinda in her saddle, instead of a hero. She implores her sisters to assist her and the unhappy woman. But they refuse, fearing Wotan's wrath. Then she resolves to save Sieglinda and to brave the results of her rash deed alone. She first summons back to the despairing woman courage and desire to live, by telling her, that she bears the token of Siegmund's love; then sends her eastward to the great forest with Grane, where Fafner the giant, changed into a dragon, guards the Rhinegold and the ill-fated ring, a spot, which Wotan avoids.

She gives to Sieglinda the broken pieces of

Siegmund's sword, telling her to keep them for her son, whom she is to call Siegfried and who will be the greatest hero in the world.

Wotan arrives in thunder and lightning. Great is his wrath, and in spite of the intercession of the other Walkyries, he deprives Brünnhilde of her immortality, changing her into a common mortal. He dooms her to a long magic sleep, out of which any man, who happens to pass that way may awaken her and claim her as his property.

Brünnhilde's prayers, her beauty and noble bearing at last prevail upon him, so that he encircles her with a fiery wall, through which none but a hero may penetrate.

After a touching farewell the God leading her to a rocky bed, closes her eyes with a kiss, and covers her with shield, spear and helmet. Then he calls up Loge, who at once surrounds the rock on which Brünnhilde sleeps, with glowing flames.

ZAMPA.

Opera in three acts by Herold.
Text by Melesville.

This opera has met with great success both in France and elsewhere; it is very much liked by the public, though not free from imitating other musicians, particularly Auber and Rossini. The style of the text is somewhat bombastic, and only calculated for effect. Notwithstanding these defects the opera pleases; it has a brilliant introduction, as well as nice chorus-pieces and cavatinas.

In the first act Camilla, daughter of Count Lugano expects her bridegroom Alfonso di Monza, a Sicilian officer, for the wedding ceremony. Dandolo, her servant, who was to fetch the priest, comes back in a fright and with him the notorious Pirate-captain, Zampa, who has taken her father and her bridegroom captive. He tells Camilla who he is, and forces her to renounce Alfonso and consent to a marriage with himself; threatening to kill her beloved-ones, if she refuses compliance. — Then the pirates hold a drinking-bout in the Count's house, and Zampa goes so far in his insolence, as to put his bridal-ring on the finger of a marble statue, standing in the room. It represents Alice, formerly Zampa's bride, whose heart was broken by her lover's faithlessness. To everybody's terror, the fingers of the statue close over the ring, while the left hand is upraised threateningly.

Nevertheless Zampa is resolved to wed Camilla, though Alice appears once more to him, and even Alfonso, who interferes by revealing Zampa's real name to the people, and by imploring his bride to return to him, cannot change the brigand's plans. Zampa and his comrades have received the Viceroy's pardon, purposing to fight against the Turks, and so Camilla dares not provoke the pirate's wrath by retracting her promise; for he still holds her father imprisoned.

Vainly she implores Zampa to give her father his freedom and to let her enter a convent. Zampa, hoping that she only fears the pirate in him, tells her, that he is Count of Monza, and Alfonso, who

had already lifted his sword against him, throws it away, terrified to recognize in the dreaded pirate his own brother, who has by his extravagances once already impoverished him.

Zampa sends Alfonso to prison and orders the statue to be thrown into the sea. Camilla once more begs for mercy, but seeing that it is likely to avail her nothing, she flies to the Madonna's altar, charging him loudly with Alice's death. With scorn and laughter he seizes Camilla, to tear her from the altar, but instead of the living hand of Camilla, he feels the icy hand of Alice, who draws him with her into the waves.

Camilla is saved and united to Alfonso, while her delivered father arrives in a boat, and the statue rises again from the waves, to bless the union.

Wiener Walzer.

This was a pantomime, representing various stages of the waltz, as danced in Vienna. The first scene "Am Spittelberg" was a lot of peasants in a mountain yard, and they had a lovely dance. The second, "Im Apollo-Saale" represented an old-fashioned drawing room in which was a wedding-party, in which one charming dance after another took place, first by the wedding-guests, then the bride & groom, and then ballet girls who danced steadily for a long time. The last scene we could appreciate

Loreley.

Leonore ——— Frl. Lola Beeth.

Leonore being the chief character, I do not remember the other names. She is considered Vienna's favorite prima donna, and was quite sweet, but her voice was much strained. The scenery was very fine, giving a storm on the Lurlei Rock and several tableaux were very effective, especially when he is shown in a boat, singing to his syren. The music is as fascinating as the Loreley herself, and the chorus fine.